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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A PLAN TO MANAGE GROWTH:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. DOWNTOWN INTERIM PLANNING OVERLAY DISTRICT

- Height limits are a part of Boston's land use tradition. Long before Boston's zoning laws were adopted, the city had in place ordinances to regulate heights. Five categories of height subdistricts will be established as part of the Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District: Priority Preservation; Restricted Growth; Medium Growth; Economic Development; and Open Space.

- Re-establishing height limits in the downtown will help to preserve the predominant architectural scale that gives quality to Boston's urban environment; and will redirect growth to unoccupied or underutilized areas of downtown Boston and to appropriate areas in outlying neighborhoods.

- Most of Chinatown-Bay Village will become a Housing Priority area, in which seventy-five percent of any proposed development must be used for housing. Residential development which was previously forbidden or only conditionally allowed in Bulfinch Triangle and the Leather District will be allowed in those areas, with the latter a Housing Priority area in which twenty-five percent of any proposed development must be used for housing.

2. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- The historic preservation amendment will establish historic preservation as a city priority. Boston's historic resources will for the first time have the benefit of municipal legal protection.

- More than 200 buildings will qualify for protection by the amendment: buildings of national significance such as Trinity Church, Faneuil Hall, and the Customs House; buildings of state and regional significance such as Filene's, United Shoe, and the Wilbur Theatre; and buildings of local significance such as Stowell's, the Parker House, and Tremont Temple.

- Protection may be extended to additional buildings of national, state, and local significance. Also, buildings and districts which are of significance when taken as a whole will be eligible for protection.

- The Historic Preservation amendment will apply city-wide, and will be in effect for sixty months, to allow time to protect potentially significant buildings from development or demolition. During this time, a study of those buildings in need of permanent protection will proceed.

3. PROTECTING BOSTON'S OPEN SPACE

- The long-term preservation of publicly-owned parks, playgrounds, waterways, and other areas for recreational and conservation uses can be assured by the open space amendment. Nothing could be built on land zoned as open space except buildings or structures which are necessary for the enjoyment of the open space land.

- The first areas to be zoned open space will include the Common, the Public Garden, and the Esplanade. Each open space zone will be further distinguished by the kind of open space within it such as shorelands, waterfront areas, cemeteries, urban wilds, parkland, recreation grounds, and urban plazas and gardens.

- Major portions of transit corridor air rights could be zoned as open space. In these areas, at least fifty percent of any development must be devoted to parkland.

4. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

- Development Review Requirements focus on a project's traffic impact; environmental impact; architectural design; reduction in the number of dwelling units; impact on historic resources; and infrastructure requirements.

- Any developer proposing to build a medium-size department store or shopping mall, or an office building larger than about ten stories, will be required to submit a Transportation Access Plan.

- The environmental impact of a proposed project will also be formally considered in the decision as to whether to approve the project.

- The Development Review Requirements amendment also provides standards for the architectural design of projects.

- Any proposed development which would reduce the number of affordable dwelling units downtown will not be approved unless the developer replaces the lost units in one of two ways: by building new affordable units comparable to the old ones; or contributing to the Neighborhood Housing Trust the amount of money required to build average quality residential units in Boston.

- A developer will have to study the effect of a proposed project on buildings, parks, statues, and other sites and objects which are eligible for listing or are listed in the State Register of Historic Places, and show that the project does not threaten Boston's historic resources.

- The developer will have to describe how much water and electricity a project is expected to use, how much sewage will be produced, and how much oil, natural gas, and other forms of energy the project needs.

5. BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

- The Barrier-Free Access amendment requires that developers demonstrate that their project is accessible to physically challenged persons. In residential developments and hotels with twelve or more units, five percent of the units must be accessible.

- Accessibility means that physically challenged persons are able to enter and use the building safely; developers must provide ramps, elevators, and doorways in projects wide enough to accommodate a standard-sized

wheelchair. In residential developments and hotels, accessibility would be accomplished by providing kitchens and bathrooms which are large enough to turn around in a wheelchair.

6. PLANNING BY DISTRICTS: BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

- Careful study and planning of each of the districts in Boston is the essence of planning for Boston. Community-based district planning initiatives will be undertaken in nine districts: Huntington Avenue/ Prudential Center; Midtown/Cultural District, Financial District, Government Center/Market; North Station; Cambridge Street; Chinatown; Bulfinch Triangle; the Leather District; and South Station.

- The planning studies will require the continuing participation of the community, local businesses, and design professionals. The Boston Civic Design Commission, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Zoning Commission, and a number of professional groups will monitor the district studies in terms of how they relate to each other and to the city as a whole.

- An eleven member Boston Civic Design Commission reviews the architectural design of significant projects. Developments considered "significant" are those which are larger than about six stories, and those which are in the vicinity of parks or historic buildings. The primary role of the Commission will be to assist the City in planning on a district by district basis.

7. LINKAGE: A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

- Housing linkage requires a developer to build housing for lower income households or contribute money to the city to build this housing. The developer must pay about $5 for every square foot of floor space built over 100,000 square feet.

- Jobs linkage requires a developer to contribute $1 for every square foot of floor space built over 100,000 square feet.

- Boston Resident Jobs Policy requires contractors performing work on construction projects funded in whole or in part by the city or to which the city administers public funding, to ensure 50 percent Boston resident, 25 percent minority and 10 percent female participation in the total construction workhours performed on the project. The Executive Order extends the Resident Jobs Policy to cover privately financed construction projects in excess of roughly six stories (excluding housing developments).

- The Parcel to Parcel Linkage Program is a public land disposition policy designed to harness downtown Boston's economic vitality to growth opportunities in Boston's neighborhoods. Under the program, the city links the disposition of publicly-owned downtown parcels with publicly owned parcels in the neighborhoods. The strategy is to use the value of city-owned land to produce affordable housing, job training, funds for social services, and economic opportunity for Boston residents.

A PLAN TO MANAGE GROWTH

	PROPOSED	INTERIM STANDARD ADOPTED	FINAL POLICY ADOPTED*
TO PRESERVE THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF BOSTON			
o Boston Civic Design Commission			●
o Special Study District Planning		●	
o Development Review Requirements			●
o Historic Building Protections		●	
o Open Space/Conservation Zoning			●
o Housing Preservation			●
o Downtown Housing Incentives	●		
TO MANAGE GROWTH			
o District Height Limits		●	
o Planned Development Area Restrictions		●	
o Revised Planned Development Area Policy	●		
o Economic Development Areas		●	
o Institutional Master Plans	●		
o Manufacturing Economy Reserve	●		
TO ENSURE BENEFITS FOR BOSTON RESIDENTS			
o Revised Housing Linkage			●
o Employment Training Linkage			●
o Boston Employment Commission			●
o Boston Resident-Minority-Women Jobs Policy			●
o Boston for Boston Permanent Jobs Policy			●
o Parcel to Parcel Linkage Program			●
o Parcel to Parcel Project #1			●
o Parcel to Parcel Project #2	●		
TO PROTECT BOSTON'S QUALITY OF LIFE			
o Transportation Access Plans			●
o Environmental Mitigation Measures			●
o Barrier Free Access			●
o Cluster Residential Zone	●		
o Waterfront Public Access Zone			●

* Final policy, program, regulation, or ordinance adopted by the Mayor, City Council, Zoning Commission, or Boston Redevelopment Authority.

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STATEMENT BY MAYOR RAYMOND L. FLYNN

ADDRESS OF MAYOR RAYMOND L. FLYNN
New Zoning and Development Rules:
A Blueprint for Boston's Future

Delivered at John Hancock Hall

May 11, 1987

Mr. Morton, ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome.

I want to thank the John Hancock Company for taking the initiative, through this forum, to get more involved as citizens in the public affairs of the city.

I am equally gratified to look out and see so many familiar faces from the broad cross-section of the business, labor, and community leaders in Boston. For all of us in leadership positions, this is a very exciting time and a very challenging time in the life of the City. Just consider what has been happening in Boston.

By several measures Boston is enjoying one of the strongest economies in Urban America.

Let me offer some examples of what I mean -- drawn from research by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Labor, and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. In the past three years alone:

- Boston's downtown has experienced $3 billion in investments in new development construction -- a major sign of a healthy city.

- 39,000 new jobs have been added.

- The addition of 6.5 million square feet of office space has enabled the economy to continue to expand and grow.

- Surveys indicate that the vacancy rate for "Class A" office space, at 5.7 percent, is the lowest for any major city in the country.

- State and federal labor surveys show that our unemployment rate of 4.5 percent is well below the national average and is the lowest among major American cities. Indeed, the National Planning Association has projected that from now until the year 2000, Boston will be second only to Los Angeles, among all U.S. cities, in the growth of the <u>total number of jobs</u>. And;

- BRA research indicates that our average annual growth in per capita income surpasses that of the nation as a whole.

All of this growth has restored the attractiveness of Boston to the rest of the country. The Rand McNally Organization rated Boston as the second most livable city in America. But only second place?

I am going to invite them to double-check their evaluation. Perhaps they missed something.

Perhaps they missed the fact that this recent period of growth has further established the City as the economic dynamo for the metropolitan area, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the entire New England Region.

Consider this fact from the Chamber of Commerce: One of every three jobs in the metropolitan area is located in Boston. In the Commonwealth, one of every five persons who works, works in Boston. And try to visualize the following ratio: For the entire New England Region, one of every 10 jobs from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound is located in the City of Boston.

Now, in addition to playing the role of job-generator, Boston plays at least two additional key roles in the economic life -- both public and private -- of Massachusetts. We are the chief source of capital and services for regional growth and Boston is the single most intensive generator of revenues for the Commonwealth. For example, though Boston comprises about 10 percent of the State's population, nearly 20 percent of the Commonwealth's revenues are generated within Boston.

The same is true in the area of economic activity. Of every dollar of goods and services generated in Massachusetts, 24 cents of that dollar originates in Boston.

Now, in the area of jobs, Boston residents have not shared proportionally in the opportunities created by the transformation and growth in Boston's economy. In 1950, residents held about 50 percent of all jobs. By 1980, that number had fallen off dramatically: it bottomed out at a mere 25 percent.

At the same time, the education system declined. Housing stock deteriorated in quantity as well as quality. Thus, for the thousands of neighborhood families and individuals left behind by growth, the vibrant sights and sounds of downtown had become merely signs of someone else's good fortune. Through a combination of concrete programs and actions designed to encourage businesses to train and hire Boston residents, we have finally begun to see a reversal of the nearly 40-year trend in employment. Of the 39,000 new jobs created since 1984, 40 percent are now held by Boston residents. These early results clearly indicate that programs such as "Boston for Boston" and the new and expanded Boston jobs for Boston residents policy, backed by a steady campaign to encourage employers to train and hire residents, are making a positive impact on the quality of life of neighborhood residents. Finally -- Boston residents are getting the chance to unlock the door and take a seat at the table of opportunity.

However, a seat at the table is no guarantee of a piece of the pie. And too many families and individuals are still waiting outside the door. That's why we remain vigilant in seeking to link growth with programs in the areas of housing construction, job training, and neighborhood-based economic development. Through these programs we seek to institutionalize the link between downtown growth and neighborhood revitalization. In 1987, Boston residents are finally participating in the Boston economy.

Yet, at this point, it is time to pause and to assess where we are. It is time, despite all the positive indicators, to ask some probing questions.

First, can we maintain economic growth without destroying the unique character of Boston?

Second, can we control and manage growth without stifling or killing the economy?

And, third, can we carry out a grassroots, neighborhood-based planning process without stalling in discord or getting paralyzed by factionalism and special interests?

As we meet tonight, these questions urgently demand our attention. The choices we make in the coming months -- the economic planning and development strategy we choose to adopt for the downtown and the neighborhoods -- will have a profound impact on Boston that will be felt well into the next century.

Let it not be said of this generation of Bostonians, or its political leadership, that in their time Boston succeeded as an economy but failed as a community;

- That we excelled in the development of buildings but failed to develop hope and opportunities for our neighbors;

- That we won the search for new investment but lost sight of our unique heritage.

We must make choices, because Bostonians have a special responsibility. We are the keepers of the Commonwealth's economic flame and we are the trustees of a legacy and history that cannot be restored once destroyed. I want to offer my strategy -- or Blueprint for the Future, if you will -- to you and to all those who are proud to be part of Boston.

My central premise is this: You don't need to destroy the City to promote growth -- and you don't need to destroy economic growth to protect the City.

Preservation and growth must be and will be united through the thoughtful implementation of a new downtown plan and zoning laws that are tough enough to control the present situation and that are sufficiently visionary to cope with the challenges that lie ahead. Our strategy must address the twin aspects of true historic preservation: One -- the protection of individual landmarks. And two -- the protection of the scale, design, and architectural essence that make up the uniqueness of Boston's core cityscape.

Leslie Larson, the Boston architectural historian, expressed it this way: "A cohesive and vital city is not composed of individual landmarks, but of streets lined with varieties of plain and fancy buildings that in combination produce an enriching visual experience... preservation should control what goes up -- as much as what comes down."

The plan must be and will be a clear set of rules for future development. In 10 days I will delineate these new rules in a series of proposals for adoption by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. They will establish an interim planning district for downtown and a permanent set of requirements to govern growth that include:

1. Height restrictions based on Boston's historic districts that will control the skyline and protect the streetscape of our downtown neighborhoods;

2. Channelling new development into areas that need and can best accommodate it;

3. Design review of major projects by the Boston Civic Design Commission, which is already established under the chairmanship of Dean John De Monchaux of M.I.T.;

4. Historic preservation to ensure that the unique architectural character of the City is maintained by protecting both historic buildings and districts;

5. Unprecedented protections, and an innovative citywide zoning plan, for open space;

6. Incentives for the creation of new housing in the downtown core; and a related commitment to an inclusionary zoning amendment;

7. Tough, new environmental review procedures and protections against wind and shadow impacts;

8. Strong and effective new rules for transportation management;

9. Expansion of the parcel-to-parcel linkage program; and

10. Zoning controls to protect the manufacturing economy and to preserve a balance with the surging, commercial office economy.

Certain of these measures will be tested during review periods. At the end of this process, the final plan will be amended where necessary and then adopted. Most of these measures will be permanent zoning law when adopted this year.

Upon completion, Boston will have the most comprehensive and innovative code of zoning law of any major city in America. It will be the first time Boston has redrawn its zoning map in 31 years.

In addition to the community process that has helped to shape our downtown plan and zoning amendments, an unprecedented neighborhood planning and zoning process is already in full stride.

This month, plans for new zoning for Allston-Brighton and Roxbury will be presented for adoption.

In June, plans for East Boston and the South End will be presented. Across the City, where neighbors once took to the streets to stop the planners, a bold and open community planning process has emerged. In the North End, the Neighborhood Council is shaping a plan for the inner harbor.

In Charlestown, the Council is working with the City to develop a new master plan for the Navy Yard.

In Allston-Brighton, the people who fought the "Spot Zoning" that was destroying the neighborhood wrote the new zoning law.

Neighborhood leaders in West Roxbury, Port Norfolk, Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, Chinatown, and the Back Bay are working with us to set the new rules for growth in their neighborhoods.

In this spirit of neighborhood participation, we worked with the community in South Boston to require the developer of the Fan Pier project to make major investments in the area's roads and other transportation systems.

When this grassroots process if finished, every neighborhood will be re-zoned by the neighbors, for their neighborhoods.

We have reached this important milestone in planning at just the right time. Through the hard work of this administration and the community, the plan is ready to come off the drawing board and to begin making its way into the law books.

Once the legal controls of the planning district are in place, a two-year clock begins to run. During that time, detailed district plans will be developed for at least 10 areas in the downtown and in the unique districts across Boston's neighborhoods. This process will address the important issues of urban design, historic preservation, affordable housing, traffic, economic development, and others, in a context sensitive to local conditions and needs.

Each of these districts will be reviewed and will benefit from the guidance of the Civic Design Commission. I will also enlist the services of many Boston-area design professionals and firms to facilitate this process.

We are ready to move forward and we must do so together. Over the past two years, my administration has asked the following questions of many thousands of Boston residents: What is your vision of Boston, today and tomorrow? How do we reach and grab the future while keeping a firm grasp on our unique history? Out of these discussions, a set of principles has emerged.

We arrived at some important, shared goals for the city that we love: we want balanced economic growth that preserves the familiar and promotes the new in the correct proportions. To attain this goal, we needed a plan -- one that is informed with a sweeping vision, but that is sensitive to the needs of each block and each street.

We are now at a critical juncture in the effort to create a Master Plan for Development in Boston. And unlike other plans from other times and places, it has not been drafted by some city technocrats working in the remote reaches of City Hall. We started by telling a talented group of urban planners to get out of their offices and into the streets, downtown and in the neighborhoods: to listen first and plan second. Thus we will finish a plan, drafted by these many hands, that will codify as law the aspirations and sensibilities that the people of Boston hold for their city.

While the proposal I will submit is a detailed, technical document, that covers a comprehensive range of planning issues both downtown and in the neighborhoods, I want to draw your attention to some of the key features of the

downtown section of the proposal. This is the creation of a new Downtown Planning District that is divided into five planning subdistricts. The formal name for this district is the Interim Planning Overlay District or I.P.O.D., and we define the downtown as that area bordered approximately by the Charles River to the north, the expressway to the east, Massachusetts Avenue to the west and the Massachusetts Turnpike to the south.

This is the section of the City which must be directed with care in order to manage growth and to maintain the City's identity.

Since 1965, a developer who owned an acre or more of land anywhere downtown could pretty much build a structure of any height. Clearly, this is no way to balance the concerns of size and design. With the new planning district, large buildings will be restricted to the economic development subdistrict that is make up of North Station, South Station, and Bedford Street-Essex Street. Even here, a limit of 400 feet will be imposed.

The era of the 800-foot tower is over.

By contrast, in Bay Village, one of the several priority preservation subdistricts, a height limit of three stories will be imposed.

In the remaining three height districts allowable heights will range from four stories to 12 stories, depending on the location.

In reference to historic preservation, the amendment I will submit on May 21 will be in effect for three years and will automatically protect 100 buildings that are of historic significance nationally, regionally, and/or locally.

During this period the list will be evaluated and the Landmarks Commission may petition the Zoning Commission to extend protection to cover additional buildings of historic importance. Once a building is placed under this protection, the Landmarks Commission will formulate regulations concerning how the building may be altered in anyway.

As I suggested a few moments ago, the third major piece of the downtown plan is the protection of open space. This new zoning amendment is based upon my commitment to the central objective of a vital parks and recreation system: first and foremost, parks have got to be good places for the kids to play and the elderly to relax. My goal, in the proud tradition of Frederic Law Olmsted, is to make this idea an enduring reality, from Boston Common to Carter Playground, from Ronan Park to Ringer Park.

That's why we are starting this year with a long-term, three-part plan for open space. It includes:

1. The new zoning I just announced.

2. A comprehensive open space policy that will be completed this summer -- and will be a needs assessment for all open space areas in the City; and

3. A master plan for recreation.

Gaining control over development means gaining control of our future. This effort has also compelled us to take on additional planning tasks, in areas such as education; affordable housing; the clean-up and re-use of Boston Harbor; and a capital plan for the long-overdue rehabilitation of parks, school buildings, and public safety facilities; the transportation infrastructure, and the construction of a new Boston City Hospital. Our ability to create a long-term capital plan was made possible by the fact that investors have renewed confidence in Boston's financial management. In the past two years, for example, Wall Street has improved our bond rating three times. We dealt with problems that had lingered for years: we made the tough decisions to site a new house of correction, a new solid waste disposal facility, and a new treatment plant as a key to the Harbor clean-up.

We are also on schedule in our effort to eliminate the chronic problem of vacancies in public housing. And, in a related matter just this morning, Governor Dukakis and I announced some of the first new public housing units to be built in Boston in 10 years.

Clearly, we want a brighter future for our young people, and we want them to be prepared for the opportunities and challenges that the future holds for them. We want them to be prepared to be the leaders of tomorrow.

In the areas of education, you may already know that my administration, education leaders, and school parents have embarked on a process aimed at securing fundamental reforms in the school system. During these months of discussions we have been working on initiatives to give parents more of a say in their childrens' educations; to provide the superintendent with the day-to-day authority he needs to implement educational improvements, to strengthen the educational and financial accountability of the public school system.

Tonight, I announce to you that within two weeks, as a major step toward implementing these reforms, I will be filing home rule legislation with the Boston City Council to strengthen the educational and financial accountability of the public school system.

At the same time, we are continuing to increase our financial commitment to the schools. Since I took office we have increased the education budget by some $84 million. And we have committed over $106 million through the capital plan to make the school buildings as good as the youngsters who attend them -- and we intend to do more.

Of course, a critical component of the renewed commitments to education has been the series of public-private partnerships that serves as national models of effectiveness and cooperation.

Yet, here again, we readily acknowledge that so much remains to be done. We have built new floors, but we have not reached the ceiling.

Of course, no discussion of the future of any major city is complete without at least some mention of the role of the federal government. For many decades the federal government was an important partner in the job of improving the quality of life in the cities.

Programs in the areas of affordable housing, job training, homelessness, law enforcement, health care, and drug prevention helped us to make headway on some difficult urban issues. However, even while our own congressional delegation has been sensitive to the needs of the cities, the federal government generally has walked away, and slammed the door.

Clearly, we in the cities must fashion an effective and compassionate urban policy that we can use as a yardstick to measure those who would lead this nation. I look forward to continuing my work with Mayors from around the country to put the cities back on the national agenda. In coming weeks, we will be meeting in cities like Des Moines and Nashville to hammer out our plans, and to make sure that the needs of America's cities are given central attention in the upcoming presidential campaign.

This evening we covered a lot of ground, as we examined plans for managing future growth in Boston. Let me close tonight by noting that the proposals we have discussed are more than just new rules for development. The time has come to chart new directions for our City.

It is our task to faithfully execute the trust that destiny has placed in our hands: to create safe passage to a future that holds more potential -- for more people -- than has been true at any other time in the City's history. Our generation has the task of finally bringing together the economic forces of the new Boston with the spirit of historic Boston.

Will our plans enable this potential to be realized? Will be have the energy and the ideas that will allow it to unfold? History will have to answer these questions.

It is my mission to see that the unique spirit and environment of Boston are maintained. When the word Boston is mentioned to succeeding generations, I want them to make the same associations that I make:

A place of families; of streets we like to walk down; of neighborhood playgrounds where our kids can play ball, and parks that our parents can enjoy in safety.

I want to see future generations swimming and boating in a clean Boston Harbor, and I want them to be able to enjoy a stroll through America's oldest public park, the Boston Common.

And let me leave you with this final thought tonight:

Most of all, my friends, I want my children and their children to be filled with pride when they say -- "I'm from Boston."

ZONING & PLANNING INITIATIVES IN MAJOR CITIES

	Boston	Atlanta	Baltimore	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Los Angeles	Minneapolis	New York	Philadelphia	San Francisco	Seattle	Washington D.C.
Master Plan	◓	●			◓	●	●	●		◓	●	◓	●
Height Limits	●	●	●			●	●	○	●		●	●	●
Interim Zoning	●			○							●	●	
Design Review Commission	●	●	●			●	●						○
Planned Development Area (PUD)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Transportation Access Plans	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●		◓
Housing Incentives	●	●				●			○		●	●	●
Inclusionary Zoning	◓				○		○	○				●	
Incentive Zoning	●	●		●		●		●	●	●		●	●
Targeted Growth Areas	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●		●
Housing Linkage	●	○	○	○	○		○		○		●		●
Job Linkage	●	○	○						○	○	○		
Historic Preservation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◓	●	●
Environmental Protections	●	●		○					●		●	●	
Institutional Master Plans	◓	●				●				●	●	●	●
Open Space Zoning	●		●	●	●	●				●	●	◓	○
District Design Guidelines	◓	●	●	●	○		●	●	○	○	●	●	●
Neighborhood Planning	◓	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◓	○	●
Barrier Free Access	●	●				●	●	●			●	●	●

○ Proposed

◓ Pending or In Progress

● Adopted

3

ELEMENTS OF DOWNTOWN ZONING

A PLAN TO MANAGE GROWTH: ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PRESERVING THE CHARACTER OF BOSTON

Boston, like all great cities, is constantly changing. Along with creating new opportunities to improve the quality of life and the economic well-being of a city, growth and change, if not well-managed, can threaten the very elements of a city that its residents cherish most. More than just the location of a growing economy, Boston is and must continue to be a livable city. It is a livable city because there is a common understanding of our unique heritage and an appreciation of our continuing roles as trustees of the natural, physical, and economic environments of Boston. Boston is a unique city because of its neighborhoods and their strong residential character. In no other American city are so many working families within walking distance of work. These realities place special responsibilities on policy makers. The delicate balance between the needs of commerce and the needs of the neighborhoods must be maintained or we will lose in the wake of growth both the character and the livability of our city.

Boston's initiatives are based on the policy of balanced growth. In addition to seeking quality urban design, this approach to economic development is predicated on clear principles:

- Balanced growth means that growth must benefit the people who live in this community by providing job opportunities, housing benefits, and other public improvements that add to the quality of life. Growth that does not produce real benefits for the people who have made the city what it is today is unacceptable.

- Balanced growth means that growth must occur in a way that ensures that the impacts of growth can be managed and the negative impacts can be mitigated. Of particular concern are impacts to the environment, the transportation system, the infrastructure, the historic character, and the overall quality of life in the city.

- Balanced growth means that growth must occur after the completion of an open community planning process. The central premise of this is that all knowledge about what is best for the city does not reside with the government. Plans work best if they are fashioned in concert with the community. Neighborhoods affected by development must have a strong voice in shaping the growth policies of Boston.

These principles provide a basis for shaping a plan to manage a growth economy, to provide new investment, jobs, housing, employment training, public improvements, and substantial tax gains. At the same time, they guard against negative impacts to the environment, transportation systems, and the architectural and historical richness that distinguishes Boston from other great cities.

Boston's economy, fueled by over $3 billion in private investment over the past three years, is driven by a great number of private choices revealed in the market place. An economy such as Boston's is guided most directly by zoning law which establishes clear ground rules for investors, and provides opportunities for citizens to shape the policies that have an impact on their

communities. The courts have interpreted zoning power to encompass a broad concept of public welfare, stating that: "The values it (zoning) represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary." With this power "the community can be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, and well-balanced." This contrasts with earlier approaches to economic development, which rested the future of Boston's economy on a few public sector decisions. Planning and development activities of the past twenty years were often well meaning but just as often were disastrous for neighborhood residents, destroying 14,073 homes throughout the city. Past planning also allowed for the destruction of many architecturally and historically significant buildings.

Today, portions of Boston that were not addressed through urban renewal are operating under obsolete zoning that, in many cases, has not been updated since 1956. Clearly these old rules do not respond to the land use pressures confronting each of Boston's neighborhoods. Boston is in the midst of an unprecedented community-based planning process that offers each community in this city protection from growth pressures and allows communities to shape new ground rules themselves. This open, community based process involves Neighborhood Councils, Planning and Zoning Advisory Committees, Project Advisory Committees, and neighborhood associations. Yet the form of this community input is less important than the outcome that it leads to. By rewriting their neighborhood's zoning regulations, communities develop a familiarity with complex land use issues, and acquire the ability to determine themselves lasting ground rules to govern development in their community.

Boston's planning and zoning policies represent the first significant downzoning in this city, and the first attempt at combining Boston's zoning tradition with a comprehensive planning effort for the entire city, and not only downtown. Simultaneously with the planning for the downtown, city representatives have been working with a wide array citizen of groups to develop specific neighborhood planning and zoning initiatives and to review major projects and land disposition policies. The community planning process gives special attention to each neighborhood, and provides communities with a significant role in shaping land use controls to meet the individual needs of their neighborhoods. This process involves hundreds of interested citizens attending meetings every night of the week with representatives of city departments.

In July of 1985, the Boston Redevelopment Authority published interim planning and development guidelines for downtown growth. This was the first effort of its kind in over twenty years. While their focus was on the downtown, the guidelines addressed city-wide goals: establishing an open community planning process; setting new development ground rules to insure balanced growth and economic opportunity; and striving for a more livable city for all Bostonians.

The Downtown Plan and related zoning amendments are a key phase in planning for Boston. Since the initial release of guidelines for downtown development in July of 1985, these policies have been the subject of scores of community review and briefing sessions, and two public hearings.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

- Historic Preservation
- District Height Limits
- Open Space Zoning
- Housing Replacement
- Barrier-Free Access
- Transportation Access Plan
- Environmental Mitigation Measures
- New Economic Development Areas
  - South Station/Kingston-Bedford
  - North Station

In May of 1987, the Boston Redevelopment Authority will take action on a package of downtown zoning regulations. The zoning ordinances for Boston address, among other things, traffic management requirements; environmental standards; programs to encourage housing; detailed special study districts which restrict height and mass; unprecedented protections for Boston's historic buildings and open spaces; and access to the downtown economy for the physically challenged.

The Downtown Plan and related amendments are the product of a broad-based, citywide planning effort. These ordinances provide the framework to begin a district by district planning process that is the essence of planning for Boston. The key elements that will guide this process are:

- o district height limits based on historic standards;
- o incentives to channel growth to areas of the downtown that can best accommodate it;
- o a Civic Design Commission to review the design of significant projects and to lead a district by district planning process;
- o laws to protect over 200 historic buildings initially, and ultimately, more historic structures and many historic districts;
- o unprecedented protections for open space and conservation uses across the city;
- o enhanced environmental review requirements for new projects;
- o tough new rules for transportation management; and
- o city land dispositions that link prime downtown sites with less attractive neighborhood sites.

These policies will be enacted this year through amendments to the Zoning Code, which has not been rewritten in over thirty years. Most of the amendments will become permanent laws upon adoption, and others will be reviewed and tested for approximately two years to provide the community with an opportunity to suggest changes before final adoption.

An overview of the proposed zoning initiatives is set out below, as well as, a summary of the city's linkage policies.

1. DOWNTOWN INTERIM PLANNING OVERLAY DISTRICT

Height limits are a part of Boston's land use tradition. Long before Boston's zoning laws were adopted, the city had in place ordinances to regulate heights. The earliest control was enacted in 1892, followed in 1896 by an act that limited the heights of buildings fronting on "Parkways, Boulevards, and Parks" to 70 feet. More detailed height regulations, passed in 1904 and 1924, stayed in place until 1965, when city planners abandoned this legal tradition in favor of less restrictive growth controls.

CITY OF BOSTON

ZONING MAP

SHEET 3, BOSTON PROPER

MARCH 15, 1924

PREPARED BY

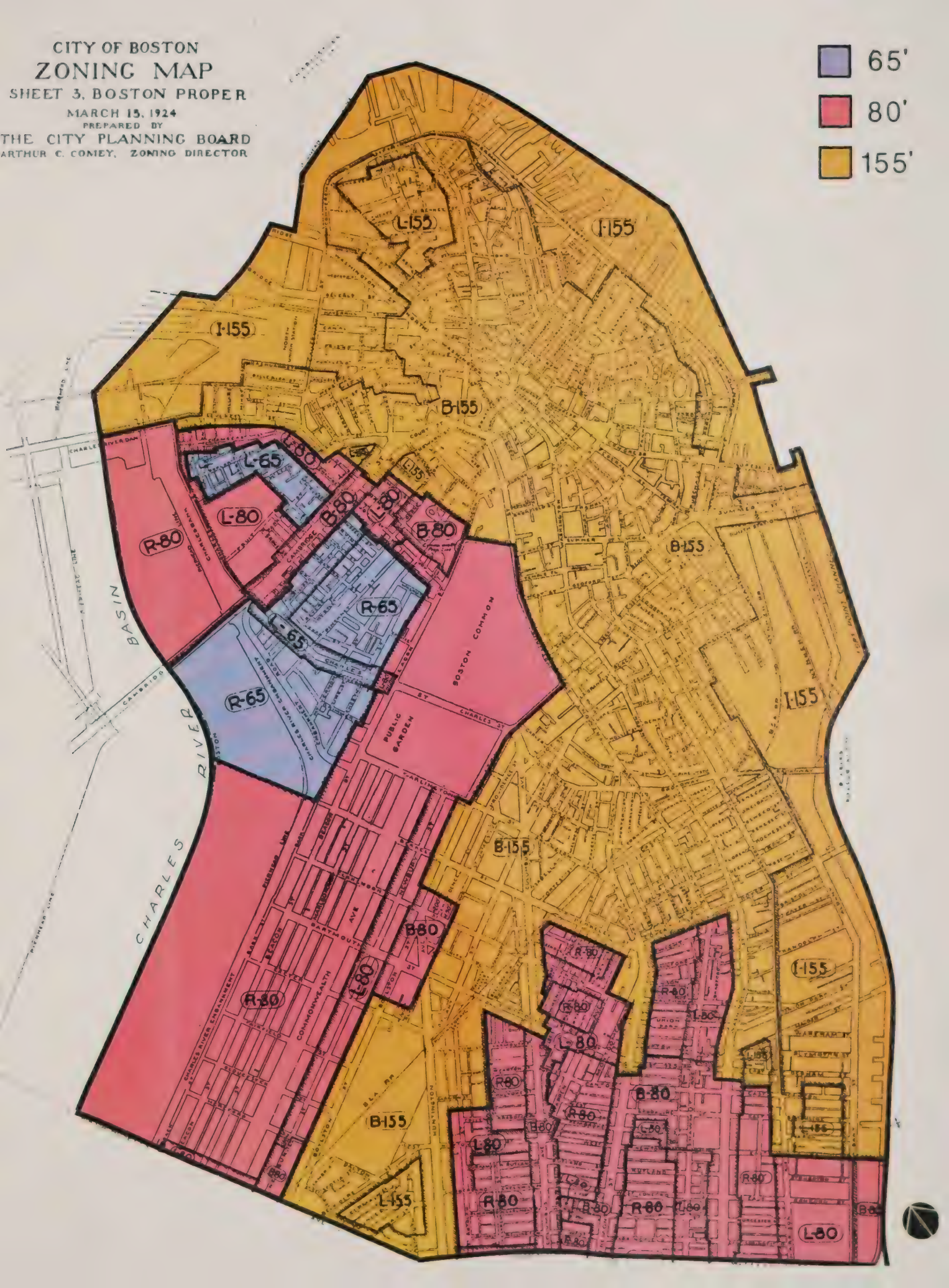
THE CITY PLANNING BOARD

ARTHUR C. COMEY, ZONING DIRECTOR

65'

80'

155'



Re-establishing height limits in the downtown will accomplish several important goals. Based on historic cornice lines, the height limits will help to preserve the predominant architectural scale that gives quality to Boston's urban environment.

The use of height limits will redirect growth to unoccupied or underutilized areas of downtown Boston and to certain areas in outlying neighborhoods that would benefit from development. This will protect existing low scale residential areas and will encourage rehabilitation and infill development in historic commercial districts. It will also direct development to North Station, South Station, and to appropriate neighborhood locations such as the Charlestown Navy Yard and Parcel 18 in Roxbury.

Height limits will be re-established through the Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD), an amendment to the laws regulating building size, location, and use in the downtown area. The planning area covered by the amendment is bordered roughly by Massachusetts Avenue to the west, the Charles River to the north, the Central Artery to the east, and the Turnpike to the south.

The new planning law establishes rules governing development downtown, while a study of a new system of laws can be conducted, and ultimately put in place. The new planning rules are a necessity because the city's zoning code has not been updated in over twenty years, and has not been rewritten in almost thirty years.

The planning rules will be in effect for twenty-four (24) months, and will apply to any proposed residential development of more than fifty dwelling units, and to any other proposed development of roughly that size or larger.

Five categories of subdistricts will be established:

- Priority Preservation (including Bay Village, Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Customs House area, St. Botolph area, and St. Germain area);
- Restricted Growth (including Chinatown/South Cove and Bulfinch Triangle areas);
- Medium Growth (Financial District, Midtown, Park Square, Huntington Avenue, and Turnpike air rights next to Massachusetts Avenue);
- Economic Development (North Station and South Station);
- Open Space (Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the Esplanade).

The new planning rules will ensure that new development complies with the following planning goals and objectives:

- In Priority Preservation subdistricts, to protect the existing architectural scale and historic character;
- In Restricted Growth subdistricts, to limit major new construction, but allow for transition from manufacturing and warehousing to retail, office, and residential uses;

- In Medium Growth subdistricts, to accommodate appropriately scaled new development on sites where it will have little negative environmental impact;

- In Economic Development subdistricts, to channel growth to underutilized areas with good access to roads, subways, and rail lines, and existing utility services. In these areas, a wider variety of land uses will be allowed than are currently allowed, such as housing and neighborhood businesses.

Height standards will be established as follows;

- Bay Village: 40' (3 stories), 65' around the perimeter (4-5 stories)

- Back Bay/Beacon Hill/St. Germain: 65' (4-5 stories)

- Chinatown/South Cove and Bulfinch Triangle: 80'-100', depending on design (about 6 to 8 stories)

- Financial District, Midtown, Park Square, Huntington Avenue, Turnpike air rights: 125'-155' (10-12 stories), depending on design

Previously, if a developer owned more than one acre of land anywhere within the downtown, a building as high as 600' or 800' could be built. With these legal changes, such developments will be limited to a twelve block area in the Financial District (bordered roughly by State, Batterymarch, Purchase, Summer, and Devonshire streets), and no building could be higher than 400' (about 30-33 stories). In addition, the developer will be required to:

- Submit the building's design to the Boston Civic Design Commission for review; and

- Pre-lease one-third of the space to identified businesses. This provision is intended to restrict speculative development, but allow companies which need to accommodate substantial job growth or to build headquarters buildings to locate in Boston.

Most of Chinatown-Bay Village will become a Housing Priority area, in which between fifty and seventy-five percent of any proposed development must be used for housing. To further promote housing, residential development which was previously forbidden or only conditionally allowed in Bulfinch Triangle and the Leather District will be allowed in those areas, with the latter a Housing Priority area in which twenty-five percent of any proposed development of more than 10 units must be used for housing.

Where conflicts between the interim zoning and underlying zoning exist (e.g., different height standards), the more restrictive regulations govern. However, in North and South Stations the new rules will govern.

DOWNTOWN IPOD BUILDING HEIGHT STANDARDS

APPENDIX A ARTICLE 27 D

PRIORITY PRESERVATION SUBDISTRICTS
SUBDISTRICTS A-G: 40′ and 65′

RESTRICTED GROWTH SUBDISTRICTS
SUBDISTRICTS H-I: 80′ - 100′

MEDIUM GROWTH SUBDISTRICTS
SUBDISTRICTS J-M: 125′ - 155′

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBDISTRICTS
SUBDISTRICTS N-O
- NORTH STATION: 250′ - **400′**
- SOUTH STATION/ BEDFORD/ESSEX: 300′ - 400′

OPEN SPACE
SUBDISTRICTS P-Q

BOYLSTON STREET ZONING
NEW ZONING ENACTED APRIL 1987
HEIGHT LIMITS RANGE FROM 90′ - 120′

* NORTH END-EXISTING HEIGHT LIMIT OF 55′

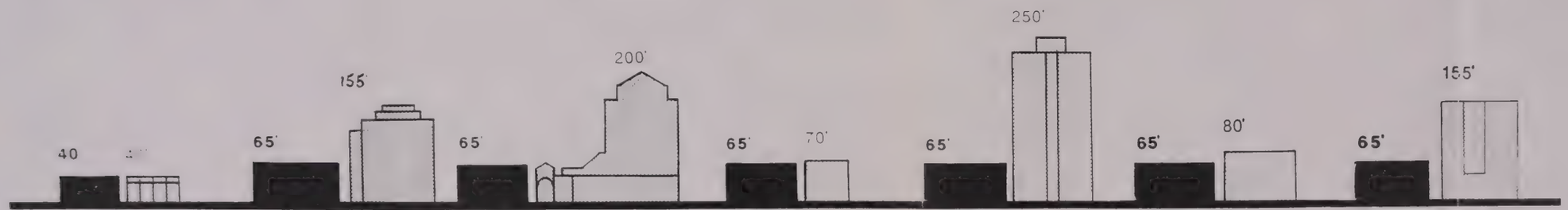
NOTE: WHERE EXISTING ZONING CONTAINS MORE RESTRICTIVE HEIGHT LIMITS (OR FARs) THAN THE IPOD, EXISTING ZONING GOVERNS, EXCEPT IN SUBDISTRICTS (J), (N), AND (O)

**** IPOD AREA WHICH IS NOT IN ANY SUBDISTRICT (SUBJECT TO IPOD PERMIT)**

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
date 5/87

BUILDING HEIGHTS

- Proposed Subdistrict Height Limits
- Existing Buildings
- Bonus Heights Available in Economic Development Areas
- Height Allowance (Based on Architectural Compatibility)



SUBDISTRICT A
Bay Village

SUBDISTRICT B
Back Bay

SUBDISTRICT C
Custom House

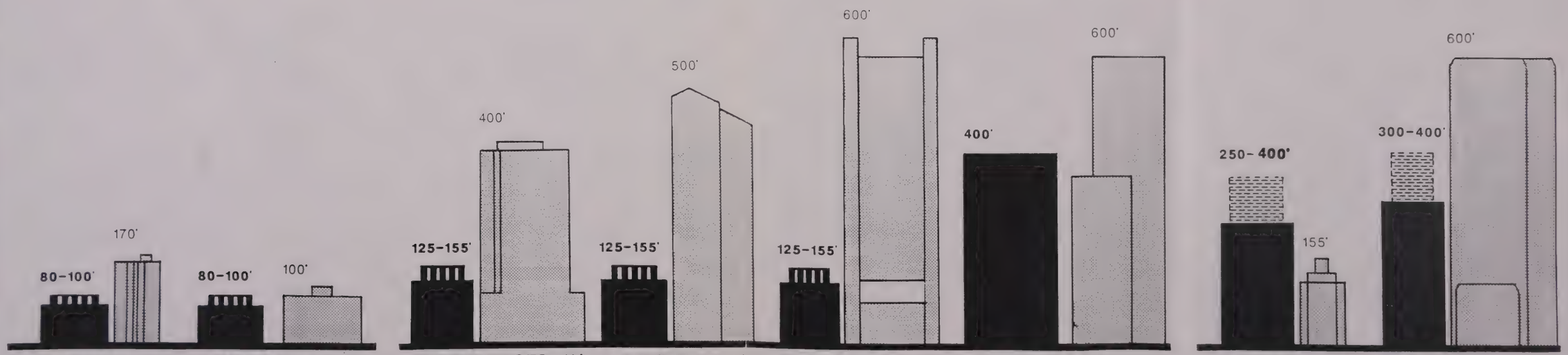
SUBDISTRICT D
St. Botolph Street *

SUBDISTRICT E
St. Germain Street

SUBDISTRICT F
Beacon Hill

SUBDISTRICT G
Bay Village Perimeter

I PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS



SUBDISTRICT H
South Cove
Chinatown

SUBDISTRICT I
Bulfinch Triangle

SUBDISTRICTS J,K
Huntington Avenue
Massachusetts Avenue/
Mass Pike Air Rights

SUBDISTRICT L
Park Frontage
Downtown Crossing

SUBDISTRICT M
Financial District
Government Center

SUBDISTRICT M
Financial District
(PDAs only)

SUBDISTRICT N
North Station

SUBDISTRICT O
Bedford/ Essex/
South Station

II RESTRICTED GROWTH AREAS

III MEDIUM GROWTH AREAS

IV ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

*The height limit for most of St. Botolph Street is 45' under current zoning; except in EDAs, the more restrictive of current zoning and IPOD height limits governs.

2. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Each generation of Bostonians has worked to improve the city. Their craftsmanship, aesthetic values, and ingenuity are reflected in the city's buildings, streets, and by-ways. The work of these artisans is also part of the public realm, the part of Boston people enjoy and share in common with one another, and should be preserved.

Boston in 1987 is a city which combines architectural elements and forms from its 350 year history of development and change. This evolution from a tiny trading post to a major metropolis was not without costs. Much of the city's history, which was portrayed in many distinctive buildings, extensive areas of parkland, and open space was lost to change. In recent years, projects such as the construction of the Central Artery and the implementation of the Government Center Urban Renewal Plan have resulted directly in the loss of 1,282 historic buildings. In too many cases valuable portions of the city's architectural heritage were destroyed to make way for new development. This disregarding of history must stop. Boston architectural historian Leslie Larson wrote that "preservation in Boston has too long focussed on the handful of Freedom Trail-type buildings while ignoring the more subtle levels of significance which the vast majority of the city's historic structures possess. A cohesive and vital city is not composed of individual land marks, but of streets lined with varieties of plain and fancy buildings that in combination produce an enriching visual experience... preservation should control what goes up as much as what comes down."

The preservation and re-use of many architecturally and historically distinctive buildings enhances the quality of life in Boston. It also makes economic sense. Since 1978 almost 200 buildings of certified historical significance have been rehabilitated in Boston. In the process more than 3 million square feet of space has been restored, 9,433 construction jobs created, and space for 16,739 permanent jobs provided. Simply put, preservation is not only a cultural or aesthetic concern; it is a critical element of Boston's economy as well.

In recent years, as Boston has experienced a development boom, there has been an increasing awareness of the value of older buildings in maintaining Boston's human scale. The inevitable change that will accompany the dynamics of a growing city should not involve the loss of the city's heritage. Strengthed public processes, such as the proposed Downtown Zoning plan, will ensure that Boston benefits from the dynamics of change. The proposed historic preservation amendment will establish historic preservation as a city priority. If the article is adopted, Boston's historic resources will for the first time have the benefit of municipal legal protection.

The Historic Preservation amendment will apply city-wide. The amendment will be in effect for sixty months, to allow time to protect potentially significant buildings from development or demolition. During this time, a study of those buildings in need of permanent protection will proceed.

Hundreds of buildings will qualify for protection by the amendment. These are buildings which the Boston Landmarks Commission has determined fall into one of the following three categories:

- Buildings of national significance such as Trinity Church, Faneuil Hall, and the Customs House;

- o Buildings of state and regional significance such as Filene's, United Shoe, and the Wilbur Theatre;

- o Buildings of local significance such as Stowell's, the Parker House, and Tremont Temple.

(A complete registry of protected buildings will be available to the public, upon request from the Landmarks Commission.)

After passage of the amendment, the Landmarks Commission may petition the Zoning Commission to extend protection to additional buildings of national, state, and local significance. Also, buildings and districts which are of significance when taken as a whole will be eligible for protection. The Landmarks Commission will hold a public hearing before recommending that any additional buildings receive preservation protection.

Once a building is protected, the Landmarks Commission will prepare detailed regulations concerning how the building may be altered by construction, rehabilitation, or demolition. No development work will be allowed on a protected building unless the planned construction complies with these regulations.

The regulations will not prevent any work or improvements from being performed on a protected building. But, they will ensure that features of historical and architectural significance are preserved, or when in need of replacement because of deterioration, that the replacement matches the original as closely as possible. The Landmarks Commission will judge applications for construction on protected buildings against these regulations, to see if the work should be allowed to proceed.

The Historic Preservation amendment does not replace any other historic preservation laws that are currently in effect. The amendment aims to give preservation groups time to document the necessity of protecting Boston's historic resources permanently. The current pace of development has outstripped these groups' capacity to accomplish the lengthy process of permanent protection; the amendment will give them time to catch up.

3. PROTECTING BOSTON'S OPEN SPACE

Three hundred and fifty-seven years ago, the natural setting of the Shawmut peninsula contributed to Boston's settlement and expansion. As Anne Whiston Spirn wrote: "The Colonist sailed into Boston Harbor in 1630 and found a propitious site for the future city: a readily defensible peninsula connected to the mainland by a narrow neck... a broad protected harbor; and an abundant supply of fresh spring water... Boston's original situation, open to sea breezes and with little predisposition to inversions, protected it from the air pollution experienced by colonial cities in less fortunate locations." The geography of Boston today is dramatically different from its appearance in colonial times, but the city's urban ecology is still as critical to the health and well-being of its inhabitants.

Boston's natural beauty is preserved and cherished in the city's many and varied open spaces. Open space accounts for 3,600 acres, 11.19 percent, of the total land area of Boston. Almost 2,350 acres of this space are city-

owned parks and playgrounds including the Fens, Jamaica Pond, and the Arnold Arboretum. The Metropolitan District Commission owns roughly one-third of the open space in Boston, notably the Esplanade along the Charles River; and the National Park Service maintains parkland at the Charlestown Navy Yard and at Bunker Hill.

The creation of an open space zoning district and nine open space subdistrict categories will preserve and protect open space from the pressures of development, maintain them for recreational purposes, and protect the significant natural and scenic resources of the city. The long-term preservation of publicly-owned parks, playgrounds, waterways, and other areas for recreational and conservation uses can be assured by passage of the amendment.

Currently, because no open space zoning district exists in the zoning code, all open space in Boston is within other zones which allow housing, office and retail buildings, or manufacturing facilities to be built. With the addition of the open space zoning districts, nothing could be built on land zoned as open space except buildings or structures which are necessary for the enjoyment of the open space land, such as playgrounds and recreational facilities.

The first areas to be zoned open space will include the Common, the Public Garden, and the Esplanade. When the city regains ownership of the Sears parking lot in the Fenway, it too will be zoned as open space to restore an important element of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park system. The new Southwest Corridor park is under consideration to become an open space zone. The Mayor's Office of Capital Planning and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department are conducting a detailed study of Boston's open space, including parks, urban plazas, and playgrounds. When completed this summer, the study will provide the first comprehensive inventory in many years of Boston's open space resources. This inventory, as well as the open space areas recommended by communities and by Boston's open space advocates, will be the basis for a complete rezoning of Boston's open space areas to afford them protection.

Each open space zone will be further distinguished by the kind of open space within it. Shorelands, waterfront areas, cemeteries, urban wilds, parkland, recreation grounds, and urban plazas and gardens will be established as open space zones in which only those activities appropriate to the nature of the open space will be permitted. Neighborhood councils and planning advisory committees will propose new open space areas, as part of the Open Space Plans adopted in their neighborhood rezoning efforts.

Major portions of transit corridor air rights could be zoned as open space as a result of this process. In these areas, at least fifty percent of any development must be devoted to parkland, in accordance with an open space plan approved by the Boston Conservation Commission. In this way, the capacity to finance new parks in these corridors will be established.

4. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Since its settlement, Boston has evolved as a vibrant and colorful urban form. Boston today is a city with many remarkable historic buildings, a visionary parks and open space system, and a richness, variety, and diversity of districts and neighborhoods that distinguish it from other great American cities.

Public spaces, the activities that occur within them, and the environment surrounding them collectively comprise the public realm. The public realm encompasses areas long thought of as public such as parks, tree-lined boulevards, and streets, but also some areas that are arguably private, yet in their function are truly public, such as the lobbies of buildings, interior gardens that substitute for parks in winter, or rooftop observatories. The public realm cannot be relegated to the park bench and sidewalk because cities by their nature and function are public places, not merely clusters of private property.

The public realm involves any element that contributes to the pedestrian experience -- warm sunlight, buildings that invite rather than dwarf the pedestrian, or open vistas of Boston's landmarks. Much as a living room is the common gathering place for the individual members of a family, the public realm is the common place for individuals to experience civic life. From a Faneuil Hall podium, Oliver Wendell Holmes, in 1876, described this "unroofed and unwalled nature" as "the natural birthright of mankind."

Since the completion of the last comprehensive plan in 1965, the downtown has undergone tremendous change, including the development of twenty new towers in excess of 400 feet. Their cumulative impact has changed the face of Boston. In the view of many, the scale of this new development threatens to overwhelm Boston's heritage and strain people's experience of the city by canyonizing streets, visually overpowering historic buildings, blocking sunlight from sidewalks and open spaces, and inducing strong winds that buffet pedestrians.

The Development Review Requirements amendment will apply throughout the Downtown area (bordered roughly by Massachusetts Avenue, the Charles River, the Central Artery, and the Turnpike). Development Review Requirements will be a permanent amendment to the Zoning Code, and will apply to any development involving the construction, rehabilitation, or expansion of a building of more than fifty apartments, or an equivalent amount of space for other uses.

Development Review Requirements focuses on six critical factors involved in construction, including the project's:

- traffic impact;
- environmental impact;
- architectural design;
- reduction in the number of affordable dwelling units;
- impact on historic resources; and
- infrastructure systems requirements.

The amendment provides for public review of projects, in order to insure that developers adequately assess and reduce to a minimum the impact a development has on the surrounding neighborhood.

- Improving Transportation Access

  Any developer proposing to build a medium-size department store or shopping mall, or an office building larger than about six stories, will

be required to submit a Transportation Access Plan. Smaller projects will have to comply with city-approved area transportation plans. A Transportation Access Plan addresses the three major transportation problems which arise from new development:

- the project's long-term impact on traffic;
- the amount of parking spaces that the project will require; and
- the disruption which the project's construction will cause in the neighborhood.

The impact will be measured by what traffic conditions in the neighborhood would be like if the project were not built.

A developer will also have to formulate a plan to minimize the traffic impact of the proposed project in each of the three areas listed above, traffic, parking, and construction. The developer must agree to monitor how effective the plan is in minimizing the traffic impact of the project.

Before a project is approved, the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Transportation Department must approve the project's Transportation Access Plan. If the plan does not sufficiently reduce the traffic, parking, and construction effects of the project, the city can require the developer to propose additional measures prior to approving the plan. The developer will have to agree in writing to implement and follow the measures it proposes to reduce the project's traffic impacts.

o Protecting the Environment

The environmental impact of a proposed project will also be formally considered in the decision as to whether to approve the project. Tall buildings with sheer walls increase street level winds substantially. Studies which show the effects of a project with regard to such factors as street level winds, shadows cast, and air quality will be required. The Boston Redevelopment Authority will not approve any project unless the developer does everything possible to reduce the negative environmental impact of the project.

o Promoting Quality Design

The Development Review Requirements amendment also provides standards for the architectural design of projects. In this way, the amendment can help to preserve and enhance Boston's urban design. A development will have to be architecturally compatible with surrounding buildings as well improve the street-front appearance of a building at the pedestrian level. In this way, the appearance and scale of downtown neighborhoods will be preserved and improved, with no intrusive or inappropriate development allowed.

o Providing Housing in Downtown Neighborhoods

Any proposed development which would reduce the number of affordable dwelling units downtown will not be approved unless the developer replaces the lost units in one of two ways. The developer could build new units comparable to the old ones, in Boston and preferably in the same neighborhood as the proposed development. Alternatively, the

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMPONENTS
(for projects 50,000 sq. ft. and over)

1. Transportation Access Plan

- Traffic and parking study
- Must mitigate impacts
- Construction traffic management plan

2. Environmental Protection

- Wind and shadow analysis
- Water table study
- Must mitigate impacts

3. Urban Design

- Architectural compatibility
- Pedestrian improvements
- District guideline compliance

4. Housing Preservation

- Replace demolished units
- Replacement units must be affordable
- Payment or housing creation option

5. Historic Resources

- Study impact on State Register of Historic Places items
- Historical, architectural, archeological and cultural impacts
- Must minimize impact

6. Infrastructure Systems

- Water needs
- Energy consumption
- Sewerage capacity

developer could choose to contribute to the Neighborhood Housing Trust the amount of money required to build average quality residential units in Boston. Under either system, the housing units built to replace the housing lost to development must be affordable to low and moderate income families.

- o Preserving Historic Resources

  The historic resources of Boston will be protected from the negative impact of a proposed development. A developer will have to study the effect of a proposed project on buildings, parks, statues, and other sites and objects which are eligible for listing or are listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Studies will also be required of the effect the development will have on local landmarks and historic districts such as Trinity Church and Beacon Hill. The Boston Redevelopment Authority may ask other expert government agencies (such as the Massachusetts Historical Commission) for their comments. In order to gain approval, the developer will have to show that the project does not threaten Boston's historic resources.

- o Providing Utilities Services

  Large-scale developments will be evaluated on the basis of their demand for utilities services. The developer will have to describe how much water and electricity a project is expected to use, how much sewage will be produced, and how much oil, natural gas, and other forms of energy the project needs. The developer will then have to evaluate whether the existing utility services can meet the proposed project's needs without making other utility users suffer from too much demand on too little resources. If the studies show that additional facilities need to be built, the utilities can be provided before problems such as brown-outs and low water pressure occur.

5. BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

A substantial number of physically challenged people live in Boston, and many visit the city annually. Physically challenged residents and visitors are confronted by such architectural barriers as stairs, escalators, and narrow doorways that make wheelchairs difficult to maneuver. Restrooms, drinking fountains and light switches are often designed without consideration for the physically challenged. Lack of raised letter and braille signs can make independent travel impossible. Carpeted, slippery, or spongy floor surfaces can be a hazard.

The Barrier-Free Access amendment represents significant progress toward equal access and opportunity for the physically challenged in Boston. It requires that developers demonstrate that the project is accessible to physically challenged persons. Five percent of the units in hotels and housing developments of more than twelve units must be accessible, and other dwelling units must be easily adaptable for accessibility by physically challenged persons. The amendment covers condominium projects, which are not currently required to be accessible by state barrier-free laws.

Accessibility means that physically challenged persons are able to enter and use the building safely; developers must provide ramps, elevators, and doorways in projects wide enough to accommodate a standard-sized wheelchair. In residential developments and hotels, accessibility would be accomplished by providing kitchens and bathrooms which are large enough to turn around in a wheelchair.

6. PLANNING BY DISTRICTS: BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

Boston has grown into a rich, diverse city of pleasant streets, public spaces, and distinctive districts. The unique characteristics of each district contribute to Boston's character. Careful study and planning of each of the districts in Boston is the essence of planning for the city. A number of community-based district planning initiatives modeled after the Boylston Street Zoning process will be undertaken in eleven downtown districts: (1) Huntington Avenue/Prudential Center; (2) Midtown/Cultural district, (3) Financial District, (4) Government Center/Market; (5) North Station; (6) Cambridge Street; (7) Chinatown; (8) Bulfinch Triangle; (9) the Leather District; and (10) South Station; and (11) the Central Artery.

The planning studies will require the continuing participation of the community, local businesses, and design professionals. The studies will vary in their focus depending on major community concerns. They will examine particular design and development issues that will lead to the formulation of district guidelines, zoning amendments and other measures that address housing affordability, traffic management, public improvements, historic preservation and urban design within each district.

The Boston Civic Design Commission, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Zoning Commission, and a number of professional groups will monitor the district studies in terms of how they relate to each other and to the city as a whole.

The Boston Civic Design Commission, which was established on June 20, 1986 by a permanent zoning amendment, applies throughout the city. An eleven member Design Commission, appointed by the Mayor, reviews the architectural design of significant projects. Developments considered "significant" are those which are larger than about six stories, and those which are in the vicinity of parks or historic buildings. A primary role of the Commission will be to assist the City in planning on a district by district basis. The Design Commission reviews architectural guidelines drafted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority for areas of the city which have special architectural characteristics.

The Design Commission has the power to recommend to the Mayor or to the BRA that the design of a project be modified or that the district guidelines be redrafted, but only after a hearing in which the general public is invited to review and comment on the matter before the Design Commission. In addition to taking into consideration public comments on the design, the Design Commission's recommendation must be based on established urban design principles. In this way, a reasonable, open, and fair process for arriving at the best architectural design is accomplished.

SPECIAL STUDY AREAS
1 HUNTINGTON AVE / PRUDENTIAL
2 MIDTOWN/ CULTURAL DISTRICT
3 FINANCIAL DISTRICT
4 GOVERNMENT CENTER/ MARKETS
5 NORTH STATION
6 CAMBRIDGE STREET
7 CHINATOWN
8 BULFINCH TRIANGLE
9 LEATHER DISTRICT
10 SOUTH STATION
11 CENTRAL ARTERY
BOUNDARY LINES DIVIDING SPECIAL STUDY AREAS
CULTURAL DISTRICT
CENTRAL ARTERY OVERLAY DISTRICT
Charles River Basin
BOSTON COMMON
BEACON
CHARLES
TREMONT
WASHINGTON
FRANKLIN
CAMBRIDGE
NEW SUDBURY
CONGRESS
COMMONWEALTH AVE
BOYLSTON
HUNTINGTON AVE
MASS TURNPIKE
COLUMBUS
KNEELAND
HARRISON AVE
Fort Point Channel
BOSTON

7. LINKAGE: A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

The last great era of planning in the 1950's and 60's produced an economy that benefitted commuters more than the residents of Boston. Both the number and proportion of Boston jobs held by Boston residents had fallen sharply over three decades. In 1960, Boston residents held 235,000 or 44 percent of Boston jobs; by 1970 that number was down to 203,233 or 37 percent. In 1985, only 181,500, or 31 percent, of Boston jobs were held by residents.

The Flynn Administration is committed to ensuring that the downtown economy serves every neighborhood of the city. The city's linkage policies are based on the premise that there is not a great division between the needs of the community and the needs of economic expansion. Rather, it is through commerce and economic expansion that the community is able to live up to the values that are commonly shared by its members, such as fairness, equity, and a concern for others. In 1984, linkage policies designed to direct the benefits of downtown growth to Boston's residents were implemented, increased, and extended to include employment and job training. To date, there is evidence that these policies are having some effect. In 1986, Boston residents held a full 40 percent of the metropolitan area's service employment, and the city's unemployment rate of 4.5 percent is the lowest among American cities. Still, more needs to be done. The city's linkage policies will continue to close the gap between those who have benefitted from Boston's growth economy, and those who so far have been excluded from economic opportunity.

The housing and jobs linkage amendments apply citywide and are permanent amendments to the Zoning Code. Any development involving the construction, rehabilitation, or expansion of a commercial or institutional building of more than about six stories is subject to these zoning amendments.

Housing linkage requires a developer to build housing for lower income households or contribute money to the city to build this housing. The developer must pay about $5 for every square foot of floor space built over 100,000 square feet. The contribution is worth roughly $2,000,000 for a typical 20-story office building. The developer may instead choose to build the amount of housing that this money would buy. A project may be approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority only after the developer has agreed to pay linkage or build affordable housing. If the developer chooses to pay linkage, the money is paid either over a seven-year period or over a twelve-year period. The seven-year period is for projects in the downtown area (bordered roughly by Massachusetts Avenue, Tremont Street, East Berkeley Street, Fort Point Channel, Boston Harbor, and the Charles River).

Jobs linkage requires a developer to contribute $1 for every square foot of floor space built over 100,000 square feet. The money is used for job-training for lower-income persons. The contribution is worth roughly $300,000 for a typical 20-story office building, of which twenty percent is reserved for residents of the neighborhoods adjacent to the development. The developer may also use its jobs linkage to create and operate its own job training program for Boston residents who will be permanently employed at the project. The developer is required to pay jobs linkage to the city in two equal annual installments.

Boston Resident Jobs Policy requires contractors performing work on construction projects funded in whole or in part by the city or to which the city administers public funding, to ensure 50 percent Boston resident, 25 percent minority and 10 percent female participation in the total construction workhours performed on the project. The Executive Order extends the Resident Jobs Policy to cover privately financed construction projects in excess of roughly six stories (excluding housing developments).

The City has initiated a permanent jobs policy which requires developers receiving city assistance loans, land or building acquisitions, lease agreements, or licenses for projects which are expected to generate permanent job opportunities, to enter into an employment agreement with the city. These agreements typically include the provisions for 50 percent Boston resident, 30 percent minority, and 50 percent female hiring in all new jobs generated and for the advanced notification of job opportunities to the city and/or community based organizations. Additional commitments negotiated through these agreements include financial contributions for job training and affirmative action activities. The city has begun negotiations with the developers for the privately financed projects to discuss similar types of permanent job agreements. To provide a forum for fair employment issues, the city has created a Boston Employment Commission.

The Boston For Boston Jobs initiative will give Boston residents the first opportunity to obtain the new jobs created by the downtown economy.

The Parcel to Parcel Linkage Program is a public land disposition policy designed to harness downtown Boston's economic vitality to growth opportunities in Boston's neighborhoods. Under the program, the City links the disposition of publicly-owned downtown parcels with publicly owned parcels in the neighborhoods. Furthermore, the program requires the economic participation of local community development organizations, minority businesses and developers, and the neighborhood's residents themselves. The strategy is to use the value of city-owned land to produce affordable housing, job training, funds for social services, and economic opportunity for Boston residents.

The first project in the Parcel to Parcel Linkage Program, Parcel 18 and Kingston-Bedford/Essex, is now underway. The Roxbury and Chinatown communities are working with representatives of the BRA and other city departments to review proposals submitted for the combined $400 million development. A second Parcel to Parcel Linkage project ties the development of a mix of housing, office, and retail space at Park Square to the development of housing on a Washington Street site in the South End that includes transitional housing for homeless women and children.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Zoning Requirements	Under 10,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft. up to 50,000 sq. ft.	50,000 sq. ft. up to 100,000 sq. ft.	100,000 sq. ft. plus	Comments
Downtown IPOD Permit	◒	◒	●	●	Downtown Only
BRA Environmental Review	○	○	●	●	Downtown/ Northern Ave. Area Only
Transportation Access Plan	○	○	●	●	Downtown/ Northern Ave. Area Only
Housing Preservation	○	○	●	●	Downtown/ Northern Ave. Area Only
BRA Design Review	○	○	●	●	Downtown/ Northern Ave. Area Only
Boston Civic Design Commission Review	◒	◒	◒	●	Citywide: Already Enacted
Barrier Free Access	○	●	●	●	Citywide
Historic Preservation	◒	◒	◒	◒	Historic Buildings Must Be Preserved
Housing Linkage	○	○	○	●	Citywide: Already Enacted
Jobs Linkage	○	○	○	●	Citywide: Already Enacted
Construction Job Preference for Residents - Minorities - Women	○	○	○	●	Citywide: Already Enacted
Job Preference for Residents	○	○	○	●	Citywide: Already Enacted

○ Not Required
◒ Required under certain circumstances
● Required

4

ELEMENTS OF NEIGHBORHOOD ZONING

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AND ZONING

Boston is in the midst of an unprecedented community-based planning process. The Flynn Administration is dedicated to a balanced growth approach to economic development that is predicated on an open community planning process. The central premise of this is that all knowledge about what is best for the city does not reside with the government. Plans work best when they are fashioned by the community.

Simultaneously with the planning for the downtown, city representatives have been working with a wide array of citizen groups to develop specific neighborhood planning and zoning initiatives and to review major projects and land disposition policies. The community planning process gives special attention to each neighborhood, and provides communities with a significant role in shaping land use controls to meet the individual needs of their neighborhoods. This process involves interested citizens attending meetings with representatives of the BRA and other city departments.

Residents from Harborpark neighborhoods, Port Norfolk, East Boston, North End, Allston-Brighton, Roxbury, South End, West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Boylston Street area are working with the the BRA and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services on interim and final rezoning that responds to particular issues raised by the communities. These issues include the need to protect residential areas from encroachment by commercial uses, and the need to provide more open space and parking. Each neighborhood planning area is subdivided into districts to undergo more comprehensive review. Over the next two years, major portions of neighborhoods across the city will be rezoned through the community planning process.

Rezoning in the neighborhoods occurs either through the Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) process, or through citizen-initiated proposals to directly amend zoning in an area. In many planning areas, the planning process begins with the appointment by the Mayor of an Advisory Committee as in the case of Harborpark, or in the case of Boylston Street by the official recognition of a Citizens' Review Committee (CRC) consisting of residents and local business leaders and property owners. The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services attends community meetings and provides organizational assistance. The BRA provides leadership in land use analysis and policy recommendations. After defining the geographical area of focus, the group then establishes goals and objectives for the area and issues to be addressed. The BRA then works with the designated community planning group to design specific zoning regulations to address these issues and to achieve the goals and objectives. The zoning regulations then are presented to the BRA Board and then to the Zoning Commission for adoption.

Not surprisingly, many of the neighborhoods are experiencing similar development pressures and similar planning concerns. Policy initiatives have been developed as concepts and then refined to meet the specific characteristics of particular areas. Among the major zoning concepts proposed in the neighborhoods are:

Height Standards. Height standards send a clear signal to developers and the community on the growth and density that can be accommodated in an area; they also serve to direct growth to sites of greater capacity, as well as protect existing scale and character.

Transportation and Parking Controls. New development must demonstrate adequate vehicular access and off-street parking. Three transportation and parking elements are needed: a Transportation Master Plan for the entire neighborhood, a Transportation Access Plan for individual projects, and an increase in Residential Parking Requirements.

Open Space Plan. With the increased population in many areas over the past fifteen years and opportunities for residential development on under-utilized industrial sites, there is a growing need for increased quality open space. An open space plan developed during the interim planning period emphasizes the geographic and functional links of open space to historic neighborhoods, and to the existing open space and park system.

Design Guidelines. The urban design of most neighborhoods incorporates a mix of architectural styles, but has a generally consistent scale. Neighborhood commercial centers have no clear identity nor do the buildings demonstrate any real standard in design. Design standards must be developed to protect the character of residential areas and historic structures, upgrade commercial centers and guide future development.

Affordable Housing and Mixed Use Reserve Districts. Adjacent to some existing residential areas are large parcels of under-utilized publicly-owned land that have the capacity to accommodate residential development and relieve pressure on the existing housing stock. Such parcels would be proposed as Affordable Housing or Mixed Use Reserve Zones.

New Light Manufacturing Zone. Heavy industrial uses, such as factories, that are accompanied by noxious pollutants and heavy truck traffic are currently permitted as-of-right in heavy industrial zones. The new Light Industrial Zone would permit light industrial uses that maximize employment for Boston's residents and minimize adverse environmental effects and truck traffic.

Boulevard Planning Districts. Boulevard Planning Districts (BPD) are major arterials and cross streets that serve as primary access to all areas of the community and contain uses that provide services to the community. Their visual prominence and importance to the economy and transportation system of the community require special studies as input to the revised zoning.

Institutional Master Plans. Institutions constitute a major part of the area's physical environs and contribute to the overall economic base as major employers of area residents. At the same time the continued expansion of the institutions and related pressure on the housing market and transportation and parking infrastructure is a major issue. Future institutional development must be planned within the context of the needs of the residential neighborhood.

The specific status of proposed zoning in each of the neighborhoods follows:

North End. A height limit of 55' was adopted for the North End on March 24, 1985, together with a Restricted Roof Structure Overlay District requiring Board of Appeal approval for construction of roof structures.

Roslindale. On October 29, 1985 the Zoning Commission adopted a map change from manufacturing to residential use. This citizen-initiated rezoning covered 13.5 acres. Forty residents signed the petition of support to the Zoning Commission. A planning study for the Roslindale neighborhood as a whole is planned.

West Roxbury. On February 6, 1987 a map change was enacted which rezoned a large area along the VFW Parkway from local business and light industrial to residential use. This accomplishment was initiated by the West Roxbury Neighborhood Council.

Mission Hill. On July 31, 1986 a map change was enacted which rezoned portions of the Mission Hill Triangle from business to residential. Subsequently the area was actually developed as residential. The Mission Hill/Fenway-Kenmore area will also undergo a planning study.

Boylston Street. The Citizen's Review Committee was formed in March 1985 to transform Boylston Street into the major boulevard that it was originally planned to be. The group focussed on design, capital improvement, and traffic and transportation issues. In April 1986 the Boylston Street Interim Planning Overlay District was adopted by the Zoning Commission, setting interim design regulations for height, bulk, and roofline setbacks. The Zoning Commission adopted permanent zoning in March 1987.

Harborpark. The twelve-member Harborpark Advisory Committee was appointed by the Mayor in 1985 to protect the entire length of Boston Harbor as both a recreational and a maritime industrial resource, to preserve sight lines and views, and to provide access to the public along the waterfront. The zoning regulations for Harborpark were adopted by the Zoning Commission in March 1987.

Port Norfolk. The Port Norfolk Interim Planning Overlay District was adopted in September 1985. The Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee was appointed in September 1986. Since that time the group and the BRA have set goals to guide the land use study, and have developed various zoning options for analyses by BRA and consultants. Final recommendations will be completed by early 1988.

Allston-Brighton. The Allston-Brighton Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee was appointed in January 1986. After thirteen meetings between the BRA and the Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee, the BRA presented a series of policy recommendations to the community. The Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee made further comments on the policy recommendations and is now reviewing new zoning regulations. Further neighborhood-wide review and comment will take place via a newsletter and a community meeting. Passage of the new rules was accomplished in June 1987.

Roxbury. Members of the Planning Advisory Committee voted August 7, 1986, at a Roxbury town meeting to begin working with the BRA to develop new zoning rules for Roxbury. The draft regulations were adopted as working documents by the community on December 3, 1986. Approximately 250 residents participated in 15 meetings throughout nine neighborhood subdistricts. A more detailed planning policy statement and zoning amendments were released from the BRA for community review and discussion on March 10, 1987. The new planning rules were enacted in June, 1987.

South End. There are two zoning changes approved by the Zoning Commission in September, 1987. One reduces building bulk by approximately fifty percent in areas in which existing rules allow apartment buildings. The other establishes a Density Limitation Overlay District which limits the number of units small one and two bedrooms in each structure, depending on the number of floors in the structure.

East Boston. The BRA and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services have been meeting approximately twice monthly with the East Boston Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee since July 24, 1986. The group has developed a Policy Recommendations Workbook and is currently drafting new planning rules, due for release in late 1987.

West Roxbury. In November, 1986, the BRA began working on zoning with the West Roxbury Land Use Committee and Neighborhood Council. Since then, approximately 18 meetings have been held with the community, the Council, its committees and staff of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services to coordinate the preliminary work on how issues should be addressed by the new planning rules. A Discussion Workbook is now being drafted. Major issues are preservation of open space and the scale and character of the planning area.

Charlestown. In response to the intense development pressures in this already densely-populated area, the BRA has initiated parking and density analyses preliminary to the formulation of new planning and zoning guidelines.

Dorchester. The BRA is conducting a land use analysis of Dorchester Avenue in order to determine traffic and transportation needs as well as how best to accommodate the competing industrial, commercial, residential, institutional, and local business uses. A planning study for the surrounding area is planned in conjunction with the neighborhood, and new zoning rules are anticipated to be released in late 1987.

Jamaica Plain. The process leading to the enactment of an Interim Planning Overlay District in Jamaica Plain started in May 1986. The BRA staff has met with the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council's Zoning Subcommittee regularly to identify concerns and consolidate a working coalition. A discussion workbook was released in January 1987, and a Spanish translation is being prepared. The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council sponsored a community meeting on May 7, 1987 for the purpose of notifying the neighborhood about the IPOD process, its boundaries, and the study sub-districts.

Fort Point Channel. A preliminary process has begun with the BRA and the Fan Pier Advisory Committee to develop new planning rules in the Fort Point Channel area to deal with the impacts of downtown development, commercial

traffic, and local residential development, as well as major public works projects such as the Central Artery depression, construction of a Third Harbor Crossing, and the Boston Harbor Clean-up.

Mattapan. A planning study for Mattapan will be undertaken in conjunction with the community.

South Boston. A planning study for South Boston will be undertaken in conjunction with the community.

Hyde Park. The Hyde Park Avenue Zoning Study and a planning study for the surrounding Hyde Park neighborhood are in conceptual planning stages in conjunction with community groups.

In addition to neighborhood rezoning efforts, many citizen groups focus on the review of major projects. Often these project reviews involve formulating land disposition and transportation policies that have profound impacts on the quality of life in neighborhoods across the city. A sample of these citizen review groups includes:

Fan Piers Citizen Review Committee has been working over the past two and one-half years with the BRA and project developers on the Fan Pier/Pier 4 projects.

The Prudential Planning Advisory Committee appointed by Mayor Flynn in September 1986 will work with the BRA and developers on the proposed redevelopment of Prudential Center.

Parcel 18+ Task Force and Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council are working with the city and state on the first project in the Parcel to Parcel Linkage program, Parcel 18 and Kingston-Bedford.

Charlestown Neighborhood Council is working with the city on a new master-plan for the Charlestown Navy Yard.

South End Neighborhood Organizations were instrumental in determining planning guidelines for the disposition of the BRA-owned South End Neighborhood Housing Initiative parcels, and a project to build transitional housing for homeless women and children.

East Boston Piers Project Advisory Committee has been working with the city and Massport on a plan to redevelop piers I-V in East Boston.

North End Waterfront Neighborhood Council is currently reviewing a master-plan for the entire inner harbor.

Park Plaza Citizen Advisory Committee is currently reviewing guidelines for the disposition of the Park Square parcel in the Park Plaza urban renewal area.

COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING

STEP 1 Proposal of Zoning Guidlines

STEP 2 Community Review Process

STEP 3 Zoning-Interim Controls

STEP 4 District Planning
Special Studies
Project Reviews

STEP 5 Final Zoning Ordinances
Final Plan

5

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF BOSTON

City's Role in the Region and the State

- As the economic center of New England, Boston provides significant professional, business, financial, communications, higher education and medical services and serves as an important cultural, transportation and government center to both New England and Massachusetts. Boston accounts for 12 percent of all jobs in services in New England. The city has the second highest ratio of jobs to population of any of the nation's 34 largest cities, surpassed only by Washington, D.C. The high ratio of jobs to population indicates that the city provides a direct source of employment and income for an area which extends beyond its borders and the Boston metropolitan area.

- Twenty-four percent of all goods and services produced annually in Massachusetts is produced by Boston's economy.

Employment Structure

- Between 1969 and 1986, Boston's employment structure experienced substantial change. The city's services activities, including transportation, communication, public utilities, finance, insurance, business services and professional services, expanded their share of the city's total employment from 45 percent (253,000) in 1969 to 59 percent (361,000) in 1986, while those for manufacturing and for trade declined to 6 percent and 15 percent respectively. Since the 1960's, employment in service activities has been the most rapidly expanding sector of national and New England employment. In 1986 the city held a 40 percent share of the metropolitan area's service employment.

Employment Trends

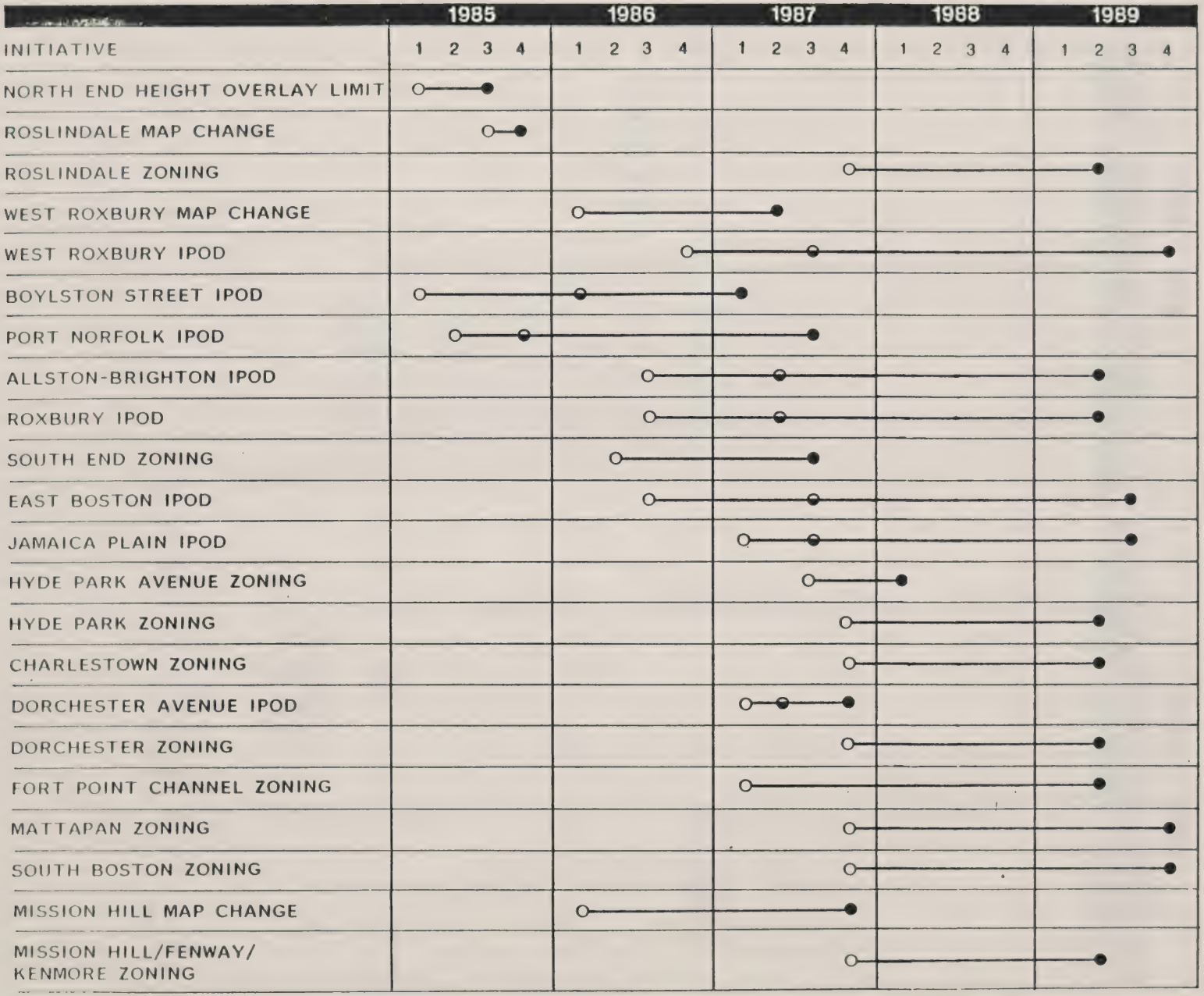
- Total employment in Boston increased by 97,000 between 1976 and 1986 as growth in a broad range of services and finance more than offset decreases in manufacturing and wholesale trade. Between 1984 and 1986, employment grew by 20,000.

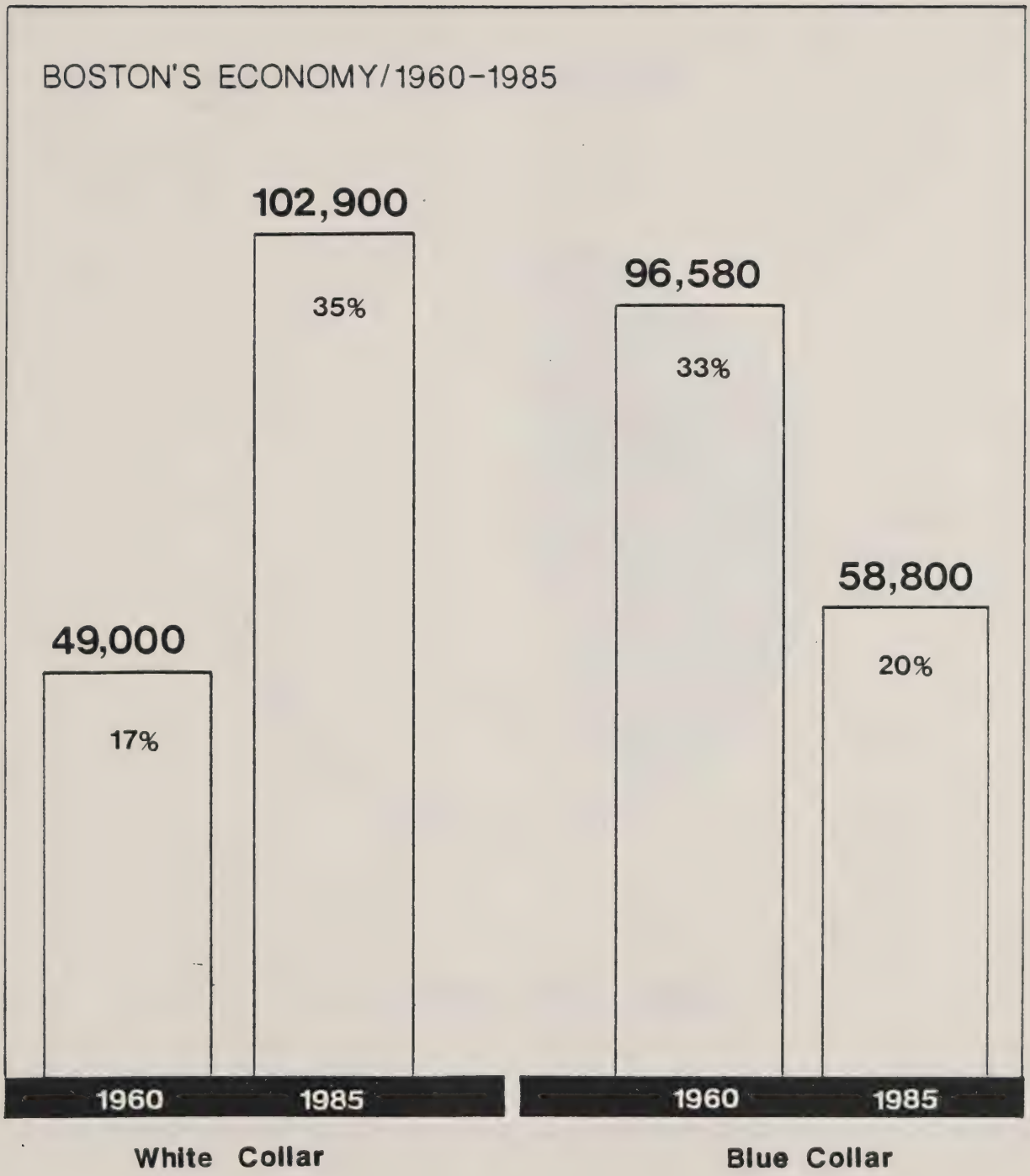
- Unemployment in Boston has remained well below the national rate. After rising in 1981 and 1982, the city's rate fell to 5.5 percent in 1984 and 4.6 percent in 1985. In January 1987, the city's unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, while the national rate was 6.3 percent.

Population

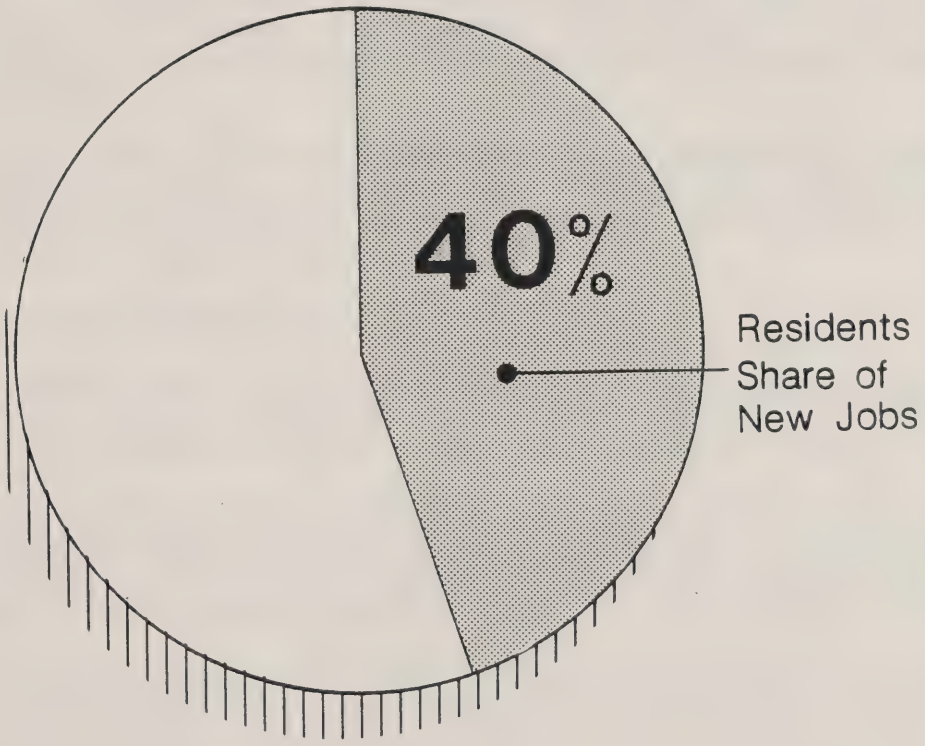
- Between 1970 and 1980 Boston's population declined by 12 percent, from 641,071 to 562,994 contributing to a population loss since 1950 of 238,000, or 30 percent. Despite the decline in population, the Census Bureau reported that between 1970 and 1980 the housing stock grew by 8,856 units to 241,304 the number of households increased by 759 to 219,024, and household size diminished from 2.8 to 2.4 persons per household. The city, as part of the Massachusetts 1985 state census, reported a population for Boston of 601,095.

Neighborhood Planning and Zoning




BOSTON'S ECONOMY/1960-1985
49,000
17%
102,900
35%
96,580
33%
58,800
20%
1960
1985
1960
1985
White Collar
Blue Collar

BOSTON JOBS FOR BOSTON RESIDENTS



36,000 New Jobs

Poverty in Boston

- In 1984 one-in-five families lived in poverty. The proportion of families living in poverty in Boston rose from 17 percent in 1979 to 22 percent in 1984, while unrelated individuals living in poverty decreased by over one-third, falling from 26 percent in 1979 to 17 percent in 1984.

- For all persons in Boston's households, the chances of living in poverty were 20 percent in 1979 and 21 percent in 1984. The proportion of families and persons living in poverty was higher in Boston than throughout the United States, with 22 percent of families in Boston compared to 12 percent of American families. Poverty rates were high among single parent families, 53 percent, and minorities: 29 percent of Black persons, 40 percent of Asian persons and 50 percent of Hispanic persons lived in poverty.

- Federal budget cuts have left Boston with fewer resources to meet the needs of poorer residents. In fiscal year 1986 the city lost between $15 and $30 million due to federal budget cuts; and the city stands to lose up to $70 million more in fiscal year 1987.

Labor Force and Educational Levels

- Boston's resident labor force declined by 5,813 during the 1970s but has increased since 1980. In contrast to the 12 percent decline in population between 1970 and 1980, the city's labor force declined by only 4 percent.

- General improvement in the educational attainment levels of the adult population continued throughout the 1970-1985 period. The percentage of the population that was 25 and over and that had completed four or more years of college more than doubled from 10 percent to 22 percent.

- The shift in Boston's economy from manufacturing to services is reflected in the changing occupational structure of the city's labor force. The number of workers in professional, technical and managerial occupations rose from 49,000 (17 percent of total jobs) in 1960 to 102,900 (35 percent) in 1985. Conversely, the proportion of the City's labor force in blue collar occupations fell from 96,580 (33 percent) in 1960, to 75,160 (28 percent) in 1970, 54,460 (22 percent) in 1980, and 58,800 (20 percent) in 1985. The improvement in education attainment levels and the shift in occupational structure suggest a concurrent transformation of Boston's work force as the city's economy moves to a services-dominated base.

Income, Wages, and Cost-of-Living

- Boston's per capita personal income is growing at a rate that is greater than that for the Commonwealth, the nation, and is nearly equal to that of the metropolitan region.

- Average wages have been consistently higher in Boston than in the Boston metropolitan area and the Commonwealth in each of the years between 1980 and 1984. This would seem to contradict a widely held notion that Boston, with its relative concentration of employment in a broad range of services activity, would be a lower wage area. Boston wages were higher for all major industry types except for manufacturing and wholesale trade. For all industries combined, Boston's wage level in 1984 ($21,284) was 7 percent greater than that in the metropolitan area ($19,945) and 16 percent greater than the average State wage level ($18,418) reflecting a higher grade mix of industries and occupations.

- From 1977 to 1986, the cost-of-living rose 78 percent in the City, while the national index increased 81 percent. From 1985 to 1986, the Boston area's consumer price index showed increases in medical care (9.4 percent), shelter (6.7 percent), food (4.7 percent), and clothing (2.1 percent) while posting a 9.6 percent decline in fuel and utilities. Initially the impact of lower property taxes and interest rates since 1982 reduced traditionally high housing costs but strong demand has caused rapidly increasing prices, higher rents and lower vacancies through 1986.

Housing

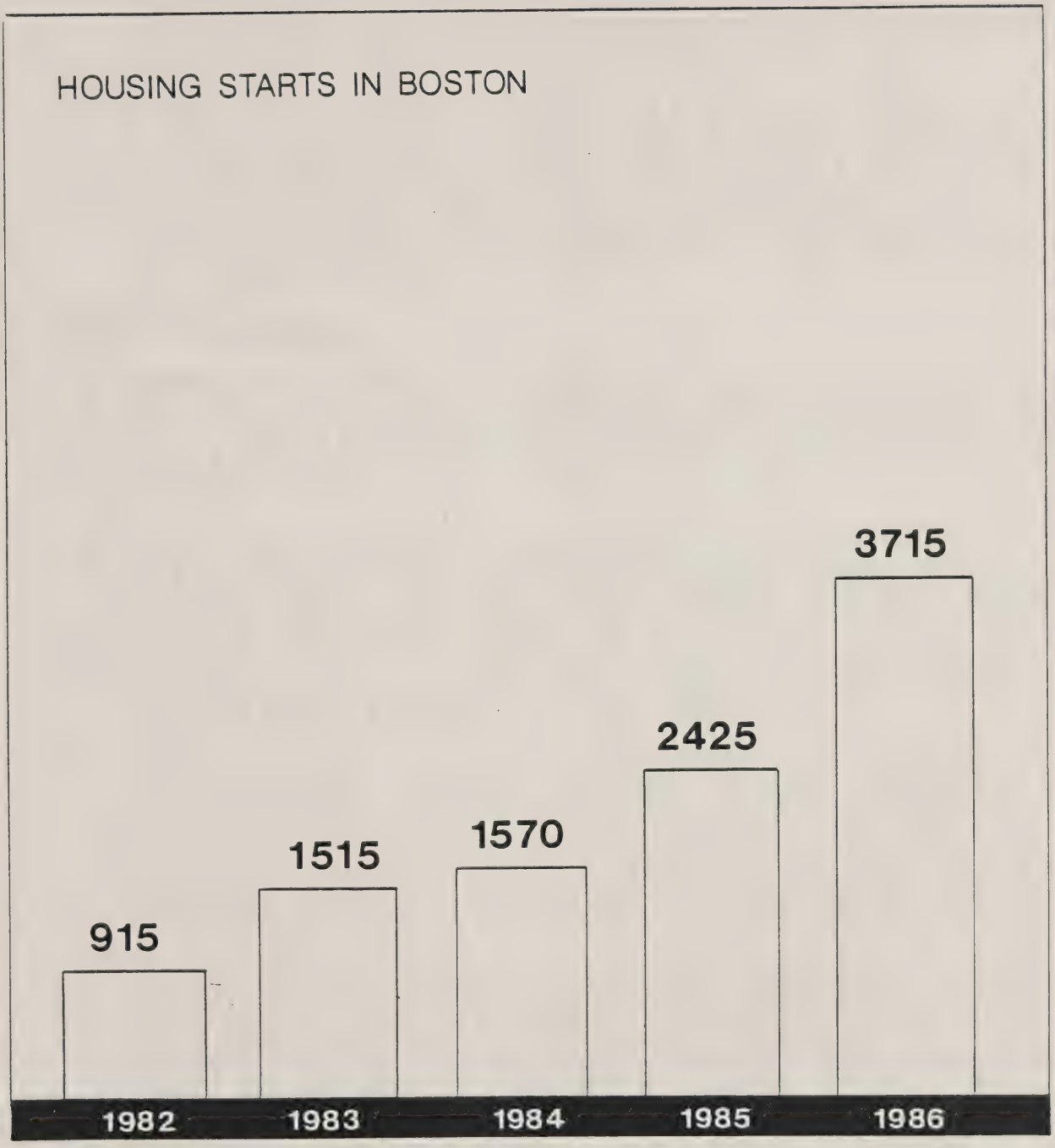
- Housing starts in Boston in 1986 reached 3,715, including more private market housing starts than the city has witnessed in 25 years. Almost 29 percent of the units are affordable to low and moderate income households.

- Although three-fourths of Boston's housing stock is renter-occupied, 55 percent of the city's housing stock, or 138,000 units, is in structures containing one to four units, and more than 80 percent of these structures are owner-occupied. The 42,000 publicly-assisted housing units make up 17 percent of Boston's housing stock. The multi-family investor-owned housing stock of 70,000 dwelling units reflects a loss of 5,000 dwellings since 1970.

- Market appreciation of 1-, 2-, and 3-family homes occurred at a sustained rate of 15 percent annually in Boston since 1975. The average assessed value for a single family home in 1984 was $112,000. Median gross monthly rents increased to $400 by 1985 according to a BRA survey. According the same source, the mean asking rent was $475.

Boston's Housing Crisis

- The housing market of Boston has experienced dramatic changes over the last few years. The price of owner-occupied housing has risen at double digit rates since 1980. The estimated mean value of a single-family home in Boston was approximately $112,000 in 1985, up from about $25,000 in 1979. This represents an increase of over 20 percent per year during that time span with an increase of over 30 percent during 1985 alone.


HOUSING STARTS IN BOSTON
915
1515
1570
2425
3715
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986

- Household income has not kept pace with these increases. The median household income in Boston rose at about a 9 percent rate during these years. Purchasing the averaged priced home in Boston requires an annual income of about $40,000, but only about 20 percent of the households in the city have incomes at or above this level.

- 70 percent of the city's households are comprised of renters. From 1980 to 1985, rents rose at an annualized rate of about 10 percent per year. This steep level of rent increase is associated with a large number of households paying an excessive share of income toward housing costs. In 1985, the average unsubsized renter household paid over 30 percent of income toward rent which is considered to be the maximum amount that a renter should have to spend.

Boston's Office Market

- Boston's Class A office market vacancy rate was 5.7 percent at year-end 1986. This decline occurred despite the addition of 1.4 million square feet of Class A office space in the course of the year, bringing the total Class A stock to 27 million square feet, or roughly 66 percent of the total stock.

- Three banner years of office market production between 1984 and 1986 were coupled with banner years of office market leasing activity. Most of the 6.5 million square feet added to Boston's office space inventory since 1980 came on-line in 1984, 1985 and 1986. Over these same three years, net absorption of office space reached 6 million square feet, or 2 million square feet annually. This compares favorably with the 1973-1983 annual average of 1.3 million square feet.

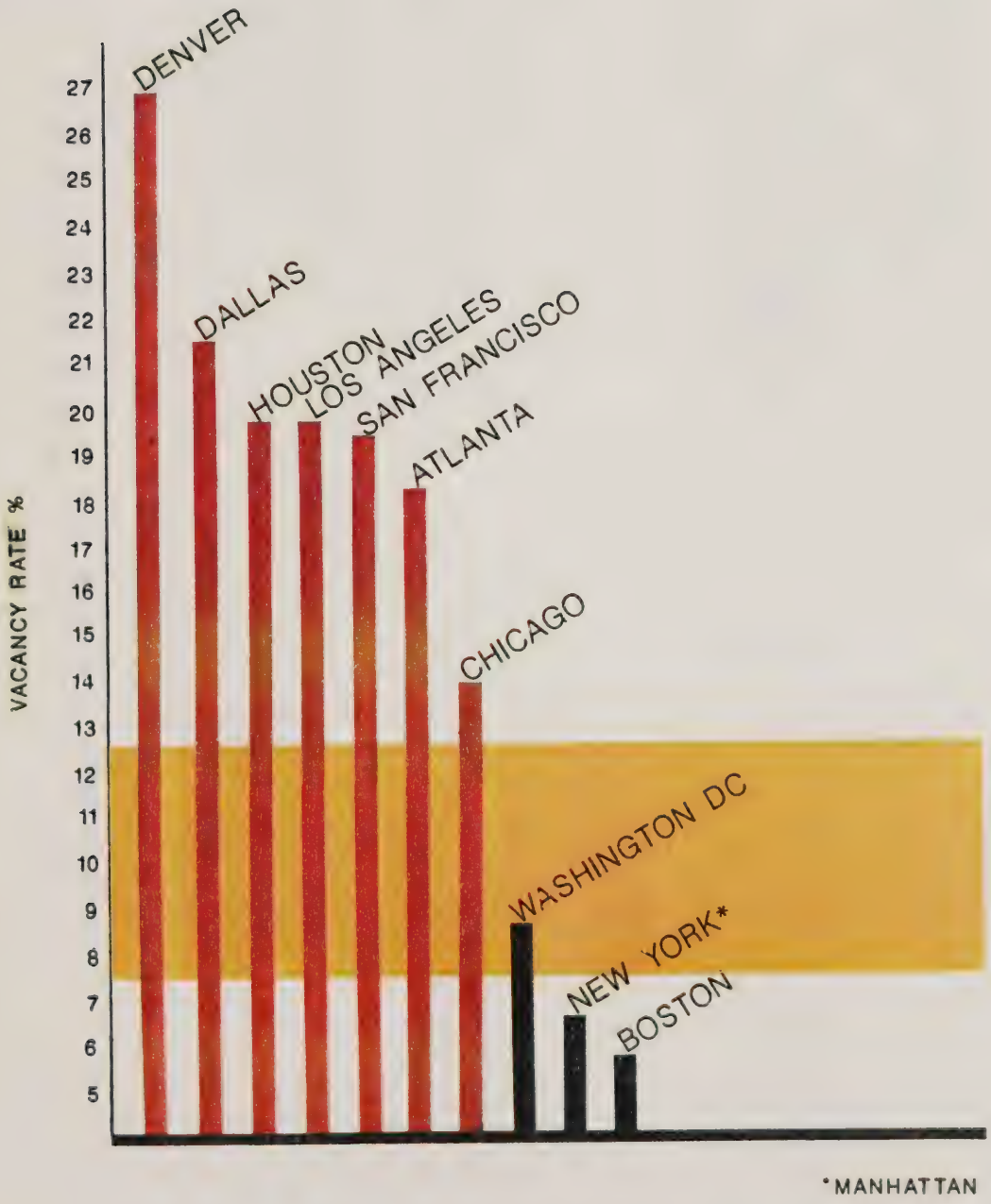
- The BRA targets an equilibrium vacancy rate range of between 7.5 percent and 12.5 percent. A vacancy rate below 7.5 percent discourages tenants; and a vacancy rate above 12.5 percent is generally too high to attract investment. The Boston Class A vacancy rate is expected to be within the equilibrium range by year-end 1987, based on current leasing trends and supply additions in the pipeline. Additional supply will be needed to keep vacancy rates at or above 7.5 percent in late 1990 and 1991.

- Boston's Class A office market significantly outperformed the national average vacancy rate of 14 percent in 1986. Boston fared considerably better than other major U.S. office markets including: New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, and Denver.

Educational and Medical Institutions

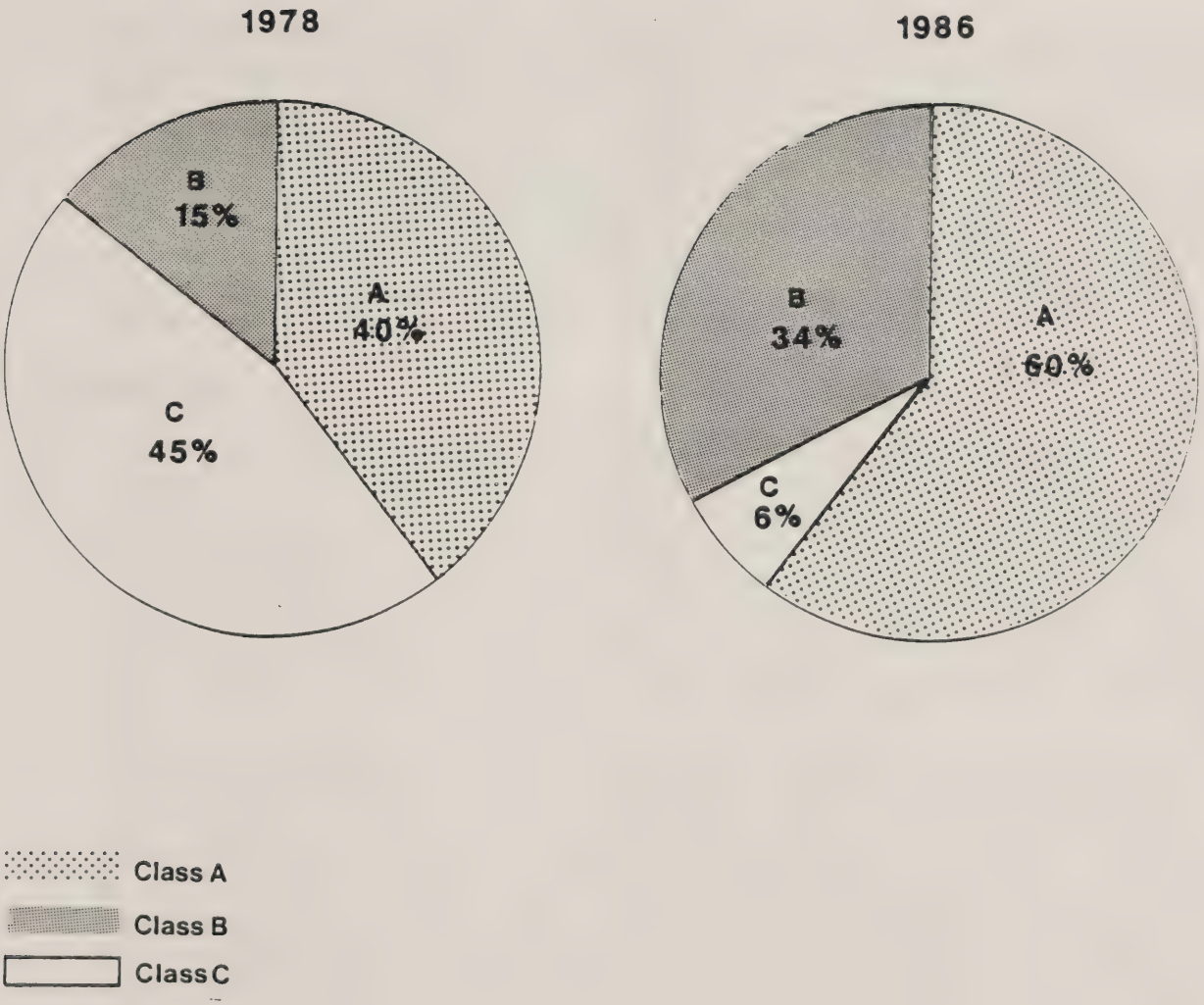
- The City has 26 hospitals, including Massachusetts General, Boston City and University Hospitals and the Tufts New England Medical Center. The City is also the home of the medical and dental schools of Harvard, Tufts, and Boston Universities. In addition, Boston has 36 local community-based health centers in its neighborhoods.

MAJOR U.S. OFFICE MARKETS
COMPARISON WITH EQUILIBRIUM
fall/winter 1986



Sources: Boston Redevelopment Authority,
and The Office Network International Office Market Report, Fall/Winter 1986

QUALITY UPGRADING OF BOSTON'S OFFICE SPACE



- Boston hosts 36 universities, colleges, and community colleges as well as 26 career/technical schools which combined have an enrollment of more than 125,000 students. The City has more students in relation to population than any other major U.S. city.

Tourism

- Boston has experienced an increase in the number of tourists due in part to such factors as national demographics and personal income growth. Also, recently completed facilities such as the Faneuil Hall Marketplace and the Kennedy Library have attracted large numbers of tourists. Tourism reached a record peak of 5.9 million in 1985. A record of 400,000 delegates attended conventions in Boston during 1985 following the 1984 mark of 380,000 when the City hosted the largest convention in its history, the Shriner's national convention with 60,000 attendees. In total, 1985 tourists generated over $479 million in direct spending in Boston an 11 percent rise over the previous year.

Transportation

- Congress recently approved funding of the $3.3 billion Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project, the most ambitious transportation project in the city's history. The project will replace the elevated North-South roadway which currently bisects the downtown and waterfront districts of the city, with an expanded and depressed roadway. The project also will create a new cross harbor tunnel from the expressway and the Massachusetts Turnpike to Logan Airport, diverting traffic from downtown roadways. The Harbor Tunnel is projected to open in 1994, and the Central Artery to be completed in 1998.

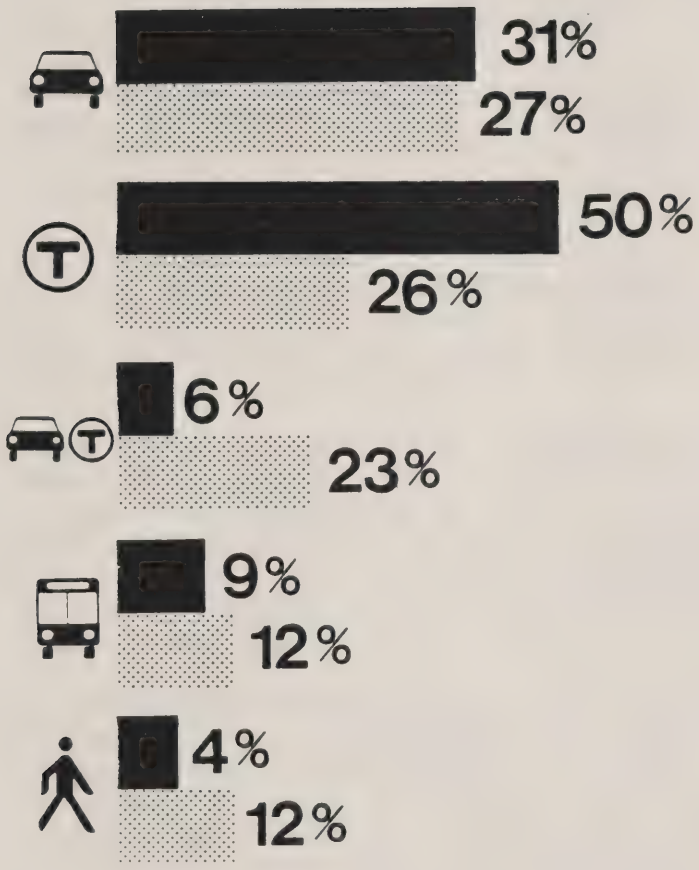
- Within the downtown, four major highway improvement projects: the Charles River crossing; the Third Harbor Tunnel crossing; the Mass. Pike/I-93 interchange; and Fort Point Channel (including the New Northern Avenue Bridge) access improvements are planned. Elsewhere in the city, 10 roadway reconstruction projects and eight bridge improvement projects are proposed at an estimated cost of $50 million. These projects, include improvements to the South Boston Bridges, Washington Street, Huntington Avenue, Blue Hill Avenue, North Station Arterials, Lafayette Place, Essex Street, New Dudley Street, Columbia Road, Herald Street and Main Street in Charlestown. Together these surface improvements will help Boston better accommodate growth, and reduce congestion.

- Transportation uses currently claim 40 percent of the 2.2 square miles that constitute downtown Boston.

- Sixty-five percent of all peak hour downtown trips, forty percent of all downtown trips and twenty percent of all trips within the city are made on the public transit system. This compares to ten percent of all trips within the region and three percent of all trips nationwide.

- A study of journey to work patterns of downtown office workers conducted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority shows that MBTA ridership declined sharply from a 1978 ridership of 50 percent of downtown

JOURNEY TO WORK OF DOWNTOWN OFFICE WORKERS
1978 & 1986



1978
1986

Car
MBTA
Car & MBTA
Bus or Train
Walk, Other

workers to only 26 percent ridership in 1986. By contrast, auto ridership remained relatively constant with ridership in 1978 at 31 percent and in 1986 at 27 percent.

- The number of automobiles travelling to and through downtown Boston increased 9.5 percent between 1972 and 1982. By comparison, data shows that public transit ridership has remained at approximately the same level as during the early 1970's.

- Downtown Boston currently contains approximately 70,000 legal parking spaces, 55,000 of the spaces are in garages and lots, and approximately 15,000 on the street. Of the off-street spaces, 35,000 are open to the public for a fee; and the remaining 20,000 are privately reserved spaces.

- Thirteen water transportation sites will be in operation by the 1990's. Total projected public and private investment in water transportation over the next years is expected to reach $102 million. Over 10,000 linear square feet of dock space will be created to service an annual projection of 3 million passengers.

- Logan Airport is served by 34 domestic and international airlines. Air travel passengers arriving at and departing from Logan Airport increased at an annual rate of 6 percent between 1970 and 1985. In 1986 Logan Airport served 21.9 million passengers (up 7 percent from 1984 and over double the 10.5 million passengers in 1975), handled 123.4 million pounds of mail and carried 541.1 million pounds of cargo on a total of 363,995 flights.

- As New England's major seaport and a center for national and international shipping and commerce, the Port of Boston provides employment for approximately 4,000 people in 170 firms engaged in port-related acitivities. Revenues generated by the port exceeded $155 million annually; forty-three percent (43%) of all general cargo, and forty-eight percent (48%) of all bulk cargo handled by the port comes from New England. Twenty-four steamship lines connect Boston to 175 ports around the world.

6

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

SUMMARY OF COMMENT LETTERS

During the two years of planning for the Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD), a widespread community discussion has been conducted. The purpose of the discussion has been to involve the community in shaping the program elements and planning objectives for the IPOD.

To date, over fifty major public briefings and working sessions have been held to gain community input. The meetings have covered issues such as traffic planning, urban design, institutional development, and open space needs. Comments on all aspects of the IPOD proposal were requested of the community. The BRA has received over 100 letters from Boston residents and organizations indicating specific suggestions to improve the IPOD and related amendments. The sense of the comments are listed below by issue.

I. Downtown Development

The issues discussed in the comment letters covered the full range of topics raised in the community debate, most notably, the critical question of growth management and its implications for Boston's neighborhoods. The preponderance of the comments received saw the IPOD as a badly needed measure to rationalize development downtown. A majority supported height limitations as a means to preserve the scale of the inner core of residential neighborhoods, while a significant majority focused on height limitations as a means to channel growth to appropriate areas of the city. A number of letters commented on a written set of rules to govern development as a positive step, apart from the substantive requirements of the IPOD itself.

II. Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation was a major topic of concern. Many letters focused on the relationship of the IPOD's height and massing limitations to the existing historic scale of Beacon Hill and the Back Bay, and suggested use of the IPOD to accomplish preservation. The majority of letters regarding historic preservation supported direct municipal protection of historic buildings through an Historic Preservation amendment. Some of these letters saw such an amendment as a means to protect buildings which state laws did not protect. Other letters perceived an Historic Preservation amendment as another means to channel downtown development away from core residential neighborhoods in which the quality of life may deteriorate from overly intense development.

III. Development Review

The review of individual projects was the subject of a substantial number of the letters received. Many centered on the traffic problems which the construction of new development entails, and called for strong review of the transportation effects of new projects.

Design review was also a significant issue. Some comments stated the need for an explicit set of design review standards, to formalize current procedures. Others called for architectural review standards which would comport with appropriate land uses for different areas of downtown. The accessibility of new projects to the physically handicapped was an additional concern, raised

in the context of support for the Barrier-Free Access amendment. A number of lawyers representing developers with projects already under city review were concerned about the impact new regulations may have on projects whose plans are awaiting approval.

IV. Barrier-Free Access

Comments on barrier-free access supported its inclusion as a supporting measure for the existing law. Broader public awareness will aid in barrier-free implementation. Letters addressed the need for mainstreaming disabled persons into society by making the city more readily accessible and viable. The amendment was cited as extremely helpful and important to the lives of disabled persons.

V. Open Space

The need for more open space and public access to open space in specific areas of the city was a frequent subject of comment. Restoration of the Sears parking lot as a link in Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park system was identified as a priority. Ensuring public access to the waterfront was also noted as a necessity. Open space advocates wrote generally of the need for additional parkland, a concern which the proposed "cluster" residential zone addressed as an adjunct to the open space zone amendment.

VI. Other Changes

Numerous comments were received from persons in the Leather District, Bay Village and Chinatown neighborhoods regarding housing and preservation. As a result, these neighborhoods have been made Housing Priority Areas. At the request of the Bay Village neighborhood, a 65' height district has been added to the perimeter of the Bay Village Priority Preservation Area. This provides an appropriate transition between eighty and one hundred twenty-five foot height limit districts, and the forty-foot height limit throughout Bay Village. Streets included are Berkeley, Stuart, and Warrenton, and Columbus Avenue.

VII. Conclusion

The issues discussed in the comment letters covered the full range of issues debated in the community for the past two years. The community comments that have been received have helped to shape the Downtown zoning as it is now proposed. Excerpts from a sample of the letters are attached.

In response to community comments received, a revised version of the Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District and Related Citywide Amendments will be published on May 15. On May 21, the BRA Board will be asked to review and approve the amendments, which would then be forwarded to the Boston Zoning Commission for their approval. The last step in the approval process is the approval of the Mayor, upon which these amendments become the law that governs development and manages growth in the City.

Excerpted Comments From Community Letters

"Collectively, the documents present the strongest set of policies and review mechanisms to ensure preservation of the city's historic resources that Boston has ever proposed."

Pauline Chase Harrell
Boston Landmarks Commission

"These regulations will provide clear guidelines to development, business, neighborhood and preservation interests providing a framework for planning Boston's future. This amendment provides balanced growth opportunities while maintaining Boston's historic fabric."

Susan Park
Boston Preservation Alliance

"I am writing to support the need for guidelines for downtown development. It is important given the strength of the real estate development market in downtown Boston, that the BRA provide leadership necessary to guide this development. Issues related to controlling height and density are becoming critically important. In addition, there is the need to preserve open space as well as those buildings with architectural and historic importance."

Marvin E. Gilmore, Jr.
Community Development
Corporation of Boston, Inc.

"Boston is a city with a rich historical legacy of architectural structures and livibility that would be irretrievably lost if there is no comprehensive plan to regulate and control downtown development. IPOD will control downtown development while a permanent and comprehensive zoning plan is created. This plan will allow balanced growth in the downtown area while stimulating development in previously neglected areas within the central district."

Bruce C. Bolling, President
Boston City Council

"The proposed Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District and related city-wide amendments, which will be presented for a public hearing before the Board of the Boston Redevelopment Authority on February 5, have my full support. The IPOD process as a whole is a great improvement in Boston's neighborhood planning process."

Thomas Menino
Boston City Council, District 5

"The adoption of an Interim Planning Overlay District Zoning Amendment in the downtown area of Boston, will eventually have an effect on the Boston neighborhoods. It will enable the residents from their community to make decisions on development."

Linda Person
Tenants of Grove Hall

"In my professional opinion, this plan and the ten policies outlined in the letter of April 6th are right on target and should be adopted if Boston intends to maintain its world class status and proceed on the same course into the 21st Century."

Stuart O. Dawson
Sasaki Associates, Inc.

"The Downtown Plan is only a first step. The City of Boston needs an overall master plan. The Downtown Plan does establish precedents for the remaining areas, but should not become an excuse for not developing the master plan. Preservation and maintenance of the quality of open space is a primary concern of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. We are pleased that the Downtown Plan recognizes the importance of open space to the economic and social well-being of the City. The Plan needs to go further and restrict the development immediately adjacent to the open space."

Elizabeth Johnson
Massachusetts Audubon Society

"The development of the downtown area significantly impacts the neighborhood planning and development process. It is imperative that the city establishes zoning codes that preserve open space, protects historical sites, and that limit the height of a downtown building to avoid negative impacts on traffic. The people in the neighborhoods feel that the concept of zoning controls, and the guidelines for downtown development, are among the most significant items on the agenda of the city. The neighborhoods will benefit when the development provides employment opportunities, housing, and other public improvements that add to the quality of life in Boston. I wish to support the goals and objectives of the Interim Planning Overlay District process that is currently underway in the neighborhoods."

Reverend Tony Bethal

"The Community Garden Project, Inc. Garden Organization, which has in its membership 580 families from Mattapan, Hyde Park, Dorchester, Roxbury and the Greater Boston area, support the proposed implementation of the I.P.O.D. Zoning Amendment."

Jim Clark
The Community Garden Project
at Boston State Hospital

"We strongly believe that when it is adopted as policy, it will serve as an additional model and encouragement for neighborhoods throughout the City."

James Clark
Mattapan Civic Association

"I am especially pleased to see that the proposed DOWNTOWN ZONING IPOD includes provisions for historic preservation which is so vital to retailing Boston's unique character. I look forward to continued involvement, as the planning and public hearing process continues."

David A. Ross, Director
Institute of Contemporary Art

"I am writing to thank you on behalf of the Boston GreenSpace Alliance's Open Space Committee for providing us a meeting with Chris Grace. We are pleased to have a chance to keep the B.R.A. informed of our ideas and hear your plans so we may all work towards the best possible open space plan for Boston."

Richard H. Daley, Co-Chair
Boston GreenSpace Alliance

"The implementation of the Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District zoning amendment from what I have learned, controls the growth and regulates types of business. Our concern as a community, can only be helped along with the acceptance of the Downtown IPOD by the BRA Board. I had attended a Roxbury IPOD meeting at the Roxbury Multi-Service Center, and was quite impressed from what was shown and expressed.

Hazel Bennett, Chairperson
Morton/Gallivan Task Force

"It is my pleasure to support the new development plans for Boston. This plan is inclusive of the height restriction, use of open space, and design and environmental standards. The ideal to retain and or use of existing building in the downtown area is unique because this mixes the old with the new, keeping Boston's history in tack."

Hattie Dudley
Executive Director
Local Tenant Policy Council, Inc.

"I fully support the goals and objectives outlined for the Interim Planning Overlay District. I believe, it is the most comprehensive community process to develop a master plan ever seen in this city or anywhere else."

L. Georgette Johnson
Executive Director
Roxbury-North Dorchester Area
Planning Action Council, Inc.

"F.I.R.S.T., Inc. supports the City's efforts to rezone and develop Downtown Boston and to continue to tie development to linkage. The draft guidelines provide a sound basis for decision-making on these issues with the "Open Process" as the mechanism. F.I.R.S.T. Inc. applauds the City's efforts to address the serious crisis in Boston of affordable housing. The Mayor's recent commitment for 1/3 market, 1/3 moderate, and 1/3 low income housing for all new residential developments is a major step in this direction."

Nathaniel Hakim Askia
Executive Director
For Individuals Recovering
Sound Thinking, Inc.

"The issue of community input in the development of it's neighborhood is very strong throughout the city and this influence should be encouraged for downtown development as well."

Sharif Abdal-Khallaq

"The new downtown plan with the input of a myriad of constituencies, from the neighborhoods to the preservation community to the Chamber of Commerce to the real estate community, will strike a balance for deliberative and reasonable planned growth for Boston's future."

Roger E. Tackeff
Renaissance Properties

"I further encourage you to channel your development efforts into North Station, South Station, Parcel 18, and the Southwest Corridor. These are the areas that most deserve new development attention."

Shirley Carrington
Executive Director
Roxbury Multi-Service Center

"NABB congratulates the BRA and its staff for the progress made in developing the downtown zoning proposal."

Frederick V. Casselman
Vice Chairman
Neighborhood Association of
Back Bay, Inc.

"The Chamber is supportive of the scope and intent of the interim zoning regulations as proposed. The district studies to be undertaken over the coming year will be critical tools in the establishment of final zoning based upon comprehensive planning studies as well as further broad community input."

Simone Auster
Vice President
Community Development
Greater Boston Chamber of
Commerce

"As a businessman in the community, it is imperative that I support the establishment of zoning codes that preserve open space, protect historical sites, and that limit the height of downtown development."

Ronald A. Homer
The Boston Bank of Commerce

"The Egleston Neighborhood Association supports the I.P.O.D. amendment because it allows for further development to accommodate Boston's burgeoning job growth, but only in under-utilized sections and with provisions of mass transit to prevent spill-over into the neighborhoods."

Pablo Calderon
Egleston Neighborhood Association

"The most important ingredient for the development of downtown guidelines is the community participation in an open process that includes the utilization of the Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD)."

George R. Guscott
Long Bay Management Company

"This plan demonstrates that the downtown and the neighborhoods can be connected in such a way that all Bostonians can actually say that city government is concerned about providing benefits for all of its citizens."

Joseph D. Feaster, Jr.
Feaster Enterprises

"The proposed Downtown IPOD represents a common sense solution to providing balanced growth in the context of an already densely developed yet, for the most part, preserved district."

Barry P. Pinciss
PruPAC

"The interim planning overlay district and related amendments are drastically needed and perhaps just in time."

Paul A. Faraca
Massachusetts Association for
Olmsted Parks

"Such a plan is critical to maintaining the long-established elements which characterized Boston's unique neighborhoods."

Betsy Johnson & Frank Jordan
Clairemont Neighborhood Assoc.

"This Association supports the effort to rezone the subject area implementing height limits and more restrictive zoning controls."

John G. Giangregorio, President
Bay Village Neighborhood
Association, Inc.

"Boston has long needed updated and written zoning rules to guide new downtown growth. This IPOD represents an important first step in that effort."

David Dixon
Boston Society of Architects

"I am pleased with the Plan's emphasis on housing, particularly its provisions for affordable housing, which would make the convenience of downtown living available to working women and not just to the affluent."

Joan Forrester Sprague
Women's Institute for Housing
and Economic Development, Inc.

"The Planning Office for Urban Affairs is writing to support the IPOD for the downtown. We appreciate its ability to provide extra housing opportunities in the downtown district, especially as it relates to the affordable housing market."

Michael F. Groden
Planning Office for Urban Affairs

"The proposed plan provides an opportunity for a balanced growth policy that links the downtown with the city's neighborhoods. It continues Boston's economic vitality (including the generation of thousands of jobs) while protecting the quality of life in the city."

Tom McIntyre
The Bricklayers & Laborers
Non-Profit Housing Co., Inc.

Flynn backs limits on building heights

Boston Globe
May 12, 1987

Outlines views on development

By Michael K. Frisby
Globe Staff

Mayor Flynn yesterday announced his support for a zoning plan establishing height limits for new downtown construction and said he is committed to inclusionary zoning, expanding parcel-to-parcel linkage and creating a district to protect the manufacturing economy in Boston.

Flynn outlined his views on a number of controversial development issues facing the city in a 30-minute speech to 1,100 neighborhood residents, civic leaders and political supporters at the John Hancock Hall. It was the first time the mayor has publicly discussed many of the issues.

During the past 3½ years, Flynn has been reluctant to discuss development topics, largely leaving that task to Boston Redevelopment Authority Director Stephen Coyle. But yesterday, the mayor chose to put his stamp on the city's building boom and how it should be managed in the future.

The mayor's speech -- staking out some positions opposed by the city's real estate and development interests -- comes at a time when Flynn is facing a reelection bid against Councilor at Large Joseph M. Tierney, who has strong ties to the city's development community.

Flynn said: "We want balanced economic growth that preserves the familiar and promotes the new in the correct proportions. To attain this goal, we needed a plan - one that is informed with a sweeping vision, but that is sensitive to the needs of each block and each street ... we are now at a critical juncture in the effort to create a master plan for development in Boston."

Flynn noted that in the past, developers were allowed to build to any height, but said that is not the way to balance size and design concerns. "The era of the 800-foot building is over," he said. "By contrast, in Bay Village, one of the several priority preservation subdistricts, a height limit of three stories will be imposed."

"Gaining control over development means gaining control of our future," he said.

Flynn noted that the downtown area has experienced $3 bil

FLYNN, Page 6

nn backs limits on downtown building heights

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ll delineate these new
series of proposals for
adoption by the Boston Redevelop
ment Authority."

Flynn said these measures will include:

- Channeling new development into areas that need it and can best accommodate it and creating incentives for the creation of new housing in the downtown core.
- A commitment to inclusionary zoning, which would force downtown developers of projects of 10 units or more to set aside at least 10 percent of the units for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Expansion of the parcel-to-parcel linkage program, which forces developers of a profitable site to help pay for a less profitable development project.
- Zoning controls to protect the manufacturing economy and to preserve a balance with the commercial office economy. The proposed manufacturing district, where office building construction would not be allowed, will run roughly from the Newmarket area to Fort Point Channel.
- A comprehensive open-space policy, to be completed this summer.

The development community has previously opposed the inclusionary zoning proposal and shown some displeasure with the linkage program, which some opponents have called "extortion."

Flynn said: "Certain of these measures will be tested during review periods. At the end of this process, the final plan will be amended where necessary and then adopted."

Flynn said that upon adoption of the plan by city agencies, "Boston will have the most comprehensive and innovative code of zoning law of any major city in America."

Flynn also noted that extensive neighborhood planning is taking place. "This month, plans for new zoning for Allston-Brighton and Roxbury will be presented for adoption," he said. "In June, plans for East Boston and the South End will be presented. Across the city, where neighbors once took to the street to stop planners, a bold and open community planning process has emerged. In the North End, the Neighborhood Council is shaping a plan for the inner harbor."

Flynn said neighborhood leaders in other parts of the city are "working with us to set the new rules for growth in their neighborhoods."

Globe photo/Jan Hauserwirth

Addressing the city's building boom and how it should be handled in the future, Mayor Flynn predicts Boston will have "the most comprehensive and innovative" zoning code in the nation in a speech at John Hancock Hall yesterday.

Flynn also stressed his view, which was a major theme for his first election campaign, that the benefits of the development boom must be spread to the neighborhoods. He said Boston should be "a place of families, of streets we like to walk down; of neighborhood parks where our kids can play ball . . ."

"Most of all, my friends, I want my grandchildren and their grandchildren to be filled with pride when they say, 'I'm from Boston.'"

Councilor at Large Michael J. McCormack, who heads the council's planning and development committee, said last night he was pleased that the mayor is setting height limits for downtown construction. "But I would have preferred for him to say that he was implementing a traffic plan to deal with the city's traffic problems."

McCormack said the mayor's speech was likely a prelude to his announcement to kick off his campaign for a second term.

Boston Globe
May 18, 1987

Growth with grace

New zoning regulations for downtown and the Back Bay, which Mayor Flynn endorsed last week, are a major step toward development guidelines for the entire city. The administration's next task is to ensure that the skill and care that marked the two-year creation of the downtown regulations will be applied to all other Boston neighborhoods.

The regulations will guide development from Massachusetts Avenue to the harbor, and from North Station to the Massachusetts Turnpike. Their adoption by the Boston Redevelopment Authority should mark the end of the skyscraper mania of the 1960s and the guerrilla warfare over specific developments, such as Park Plaza, of the '70s.

"There'll be no more New England Lifes, no more International Places," said BRA Director Stephen Coyle.

At long last, the BRA has put a cap on the city's jagged skyline. The plan would declare large sections – Boylston Street, Beacon Hill, Chinatown – off-limits to skyscrapers. From Storrow Drive to Atlantic Avenue buildings would be limited to 155 feet, a return to the standard that prevailed In the low-rise Boston of old. Big development would be channeled to two areas – North Station and South station. Even there, buildings would be limited to 400 feet, about the size of the old Hancock Tower.

The plan contains other worthwhile elements. It orders developers to plot the environmental and traffic impacts of projects, mandates better access for the handicapped to new buildings, and protects 100 historic structures.

Just as important as the specifics of the plan is the BRA's insistence that neighborhood groups share in the planning. Their participation has ensured that the regulations are responsive to neighborhood needs and guarantees that residents will keep a close watch on the city when the plan is implemented.

The plan does contain a catch: It does not cover the next mega-development to change the face of Boston. The Fan Pier parcel of land is just outside the downtown planning district. Yet the point of this project is to drag Boston's downtown section south of the Fort Point Channel, thus justifying the size of the buildings and the high rents to be charged.

The regulations will be in effect only until a final zoning plan is adopted in 1989. By then, the entire city wil be rezoned. The purpose of the rezoning, Mayor Flynn said, is to maintain the unique character of Boston and "to institutionalize the link between downtown growth and neighborhood revitalization."

Coyle chose an incremental approach to achieving this goal. Because he feared that developers, wary of the downtown rules, might leapfrog to Allston-Brighton, zoning rules for that neighborhood will be approved by the BRA this week.

Coyle's next challenge is to make sure that the BRA does not relax its diligence as it shifts attention to neighborhood zoning. Only then will the mayor's vision be shaped into a strategy to benefit all Bostonians.

BOSTON Boston Globe
May 17, 1987

Rezoning and politics: a perfect match

Flynn attracts election-year support by embracing plan to control the city's downtown growth

By Ofile McManus
Globe Staff

Four months before the 1983 primary election, Raymond Flynn joined six mayoral candidates at a Boston Society of Architects' forum on development in the city. Flynn's message was hardly inspiring, and he was clearly uncomfortable with questions about aesthetics, historic preservation or what to do about growth – except to make sure that the neighborhoods did not lose out.

Earlier this week, Flynn addressed another Back Bay audience, this time with some conviction of the need to plan for the city's future. "Let it not be said of this generation of Bostonians or its political leadership that in their time Boston succeeded as an economy but failed as a community, that we excelled in the development of buildings but failed to develop hope, that we won the search for new investment but lost sight of our unique heritage," he said in an obviously carefully crafted speech.

What a difference five years make. Finally, an elected public official says what the citizenry has been waiting to hear. At last a bona fide politician stands up to defend the qualities that make Boston Boston. Could it be that a mayor of this city is willing to say publicly that the city need not be destroyed in order to promote growth?

Flynn told the audience of 1,000 that this week he will personally submit a clear set of development rules – with height restrictions, historic-preservation initiatives and environmental-review requirements all laid out in a comprehensive new zoning code – to the Boston Redevelopment Authority board.

City Councilors Michael McCormack and Joseph Tierney, the latter a mayoral candidate, were quick to point out that this is an election year and that the timing of the mayor's remarks was nothing if not politically opportune. A few critics complained that Flynn's commitment to a major overhaul of the city's zoning laws – last revised 21 years ago – is too little, too late. He's already been in office three and a half years, they said, so why has he waited so long? Monster buildings now crowd the skyline, the traffic is getting worse, and the controversial Fan Piers are exempt from the new restrictions.

Others also voice concerns

Moreover, the Greater Boston Real Estate Board is concerned about a few specifics, including a 50 cent per-square foot traffic mitigation fee, and the mayor last Thursday had to ask BRA director Stephen Coyle to assuage the fears of a group of union representatives who worried that the proposed restrictions represented a moratorium on growth.

But, by and large, reaction to the mayor's speech – and to the Boston Redevelopment Authority's proposed zoning changes – has been positive. The business community, preservationists, developers, open-space activists and neighborhood activists are supporting the plan

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Globe staff photo/David Ryan

...ing halt the march of high-rise towers in the city's downtown?

Boston Globe May 17, 1987

Flynn

Continued from Page A1

some more cautiously than others. Last week, even the BRA's staunchest critics were saying the zoning proposal, which has been drafted and redrafted five times over the course of the last two and a half years, was a step in the right direction. Even Andrew Hamilton of the Conservation Law Foundation, which has some serious reservations about traffic and congestion and has threatened a suit over the Fan Piers, called it a "shockingly good document."

What is going on here? Where is the *sturm, the drang*, the tension, the confrontation, the anger, the cynicism, the contentiousness that has made Boston's development drama such a highly charged blood sport for the last 10 years?

Like others, Rosalind Gorin, president of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, said that during the last two years the BRA staff had gone out of its way to bring the city's development factions together. The BRA listened and incorporated recommendations from a range of constituency groups throughout the city. They showed that new zoning laws could be drawn up in a pilot area along Boylston Street and started working with neighborhood groups in Allston Brighton, Roxbury, the North End and Dorchester's Port Norfolk section.

"In my view, they did a masterful job and addressed the concerns of very diverse groups in the city," Gorin explained. "They put in a lot of time and hard work, and that's reflected in the positive reaction they're getting now."

The proposed zoning amendments, which must be approved by the five-member BRA board and the 11-member zoning commission before they become law, may not be the master plan that Coyle boldly promised after his arrival from San Francisco four years ago. But Coyle now says that he learned very quickly that Boston is a city where the grass roots count, where planning had to be "bottom up," rather than "top down."

"We gradually came to see zoning as the common ground, the neutral plane that people could come to," he said this week. "In a predominantly private economy, you must start with the zoning because it's the only legal way to control things."

Coyle acknowledges that the current zoning laws are a sham – 500 to 1,000 variances are granted annually – but he believes that Boston's better-informed citizenry will prevent the BRA's spanking new code from suffering a similar fate.

Coyle argued in an interview that there is plenty of Boston left to save. He whipped out a map showing that there are only 40 buildings higer than 200 feet in the city's downtown core, which is roughly bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, the Turnpike, the Charles River and the waterfront. Reimposing height limits ranging from 40 to 155 feet over most of this area will protect Boston against wanton development, he said. Allowing bigger buildings of 250 to 400 feet to be built near North Station, South Station, the Bedford Street corridor, and approving the Fan Piers project, he said, will provide the city with a safety valve for growth.

Undoubtedly, there will still be some healthy disagreement on this. On Tuesday afternoon, the Boston College Citizen's Seminar will round up the usual suspects, including former BRA director [illegible]

sional series of panels during the last 30 years on controlling growth in Boston. Some worry that the proposed zoning amendments are no substitute for a master plan that would articulate a physical vision of the city beyond height limits and setback requirements. Some worry that the city has yet to grapple with how much it costs to provide water, sewer, police and fire protection for new developments. Some, like Elizabeth Padjen, the former chair of the Boston Society of Architects' urban design committee, worries what will happen if the bottom drops out of the city's economy.

"Once the boom is over, the city will have lost whatever bargaining position it has now," she said. "It's not too late for the city, but we'd better do some pretty quick mobilization."

But those who have been on the front lines see Mayor Flynn's involvement this week as a turning point for Boston. Joseph Breitenetcher, who was chairman of a joint committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Boston Society of Architects that addressed development and design questions three years ago, believes that Flynn can make a difference.

"There is no question that the work of the BRA staff is important and very impressive. But the man who was elected was Ray Flynn. It's his city. He needs to say what should be done," the Beacon Companies executive explained. "We've heard from him on jobs. We've heard from him on housing. We've heard from him affirmatively on race relations and balancing the city budget. Now, even if we disagree on some of the fine points, he's showing that he thinks this one matters and is worth fighting for. This isn't the culmination, but it's a good beginning."

Boston Globe May 13, 1987

Flynn readying plan to protect open space

Study under way; zoning restriction sought

By Michael K. Frisby
Globe Staff

Mayor Flynn's administration is devising a comprehensive plan to protect city parks, squares and gardens from developers and determine how the land can best serve the public.

The mayor announced on Monday that he will soon propose a zoning restriction that would protect open space, while his aides are preparing a study that will analyze about 280 parks, malls and squares comprising more than 2,000 acres and 30 other urban sites totaling more than 1,000 acres.

"The study being conducted by the city is probably the most comprehensive plan for open space in the last century," said Charlotte Kahn, director of Boston Urban Gardeners.

Mary Nee, director of the city Capital Planning Office, said her office has been working on the study since August after determining that a master plan to upgrade the parklands was needed.

Under the zoning amendment, neighborhood councils, advisory committees and the Boston Conservation Commission would be able to ask the Zoning Commission to designate certain sites as open-space zones. Even a group of 10 or more residents could request the open-space designation.

The amendment, which would have to be adopted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Zoning Commission, would authorize the creation of open-space zones for parks, recreation land, waterfront access land, gardens and cluster residential developments. The amendment would also provide zoning rules for "air rights" to build over highways.

Stephen Coyle, director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, said yesterday that the zoning amendment may reduce the scale of some proposed development projects.

For instance, Coyle said developer Alan J. Green is proposing to build 117 condominium units on the Boston side of his development project planned at the site of the former St. Sebastian's School on the Boston-Newton border.

Coyle said that under the zoning amendment, any residential development covering more than 5 acres could be zoned for "cluster residential," which would restrict the project density and require that half the land be left open. He said the project would likely be reduced to about 41 units in Boston. The developer is also planning 113 units in Newton that would not be affected by Boston laws.

The proposed zoning amendment also would require that:

- Fifty percent of any development constructed over transit corridors be open space.
- Any development in shorelands and waterfront access zones be limited to water-based recreation facilities, parks and excursion boat services.
- All publicly owned parks, playgrounds, recreation areas, waterfront areas and urban gardens be protected from development.

Mark Premack, executive director, of the Boston Greenspace Alliance, said that the plan shows a very positive direction by the city. But Premack said the zoning amendment must be applied to be successful.

Premack said many urban gardens in the South End and Roxbury are on land owned by the city or the BRA. He emphasized that the zoning amendment should apply to those properties.

Boston Herald
May 12, 1987

Flynn unveils 'blueprint' for Boston's future

By JOE SCIACCA

MAYOR RAY Flynn last night unveiled a "blueprint" for Boston's future, vowed to corral booming development with tighter zoning and declared "The era of the 800-foot tower is over.

"Gaining control over development means gaining control of our future," Flynn said to the applause of city officials and businessmen at John Hancock's Dorothy Quincy Suite.

"I want my children and their children to be filled with pride when they say, 'I'm from Boston.'"

The plan covers a broad area -- from capping the height of downtown buildings to 40 stories -- to channeling development into delapidated city neighborhoods outside of downtown.

But critics said Flynn's speech featured old news draped in new rhetoric.

Councilor Michael McCormack, chairman of the council committee that deals with development, said, "It was a well-orchestrated press conference."

McCormack said Flynn's master plan is designed to make up for inaction during his past years in office, charging Flynn is now trying to "retrofit" the plan to already-developed areas.

But the mayor and Boston Redevelopment Authority Director Stephen Coyle said the blueprint marks the first time Boston's zoning map has been redrawn in three decades.

"You don't need to destroy the city to promote growth, and you don't need to destroy economic growth to protect the city," Flynn said.

The mayor said he'll spell out the proposed new zoning and development rules to the BRA in the next 10 days.

He said the new rules will provide "unprecedented protections" for open space and for 100 historic sites, tough review procedures for the wind and shadow impacts of buildings, expansion of the parcel to parcel linkage program and traffic flow changes.

"Upon completion, Boston will have the most comprehensive and innovative code of zoning of any city in America," he said.

Flynn's plan incorporates much of the proposed downtown planning district already before the BRA, but aides said it goes further as a citywide policy statement.

Paul Demakis, chairman of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay, called Flynn's speech "a very positive step, providing it is all done with full community participation and support."

Coyle promised neighborhood activists will be heard, saying, "In the past, very often the planner's vision became the neighborhood's nightmare."

Flynn also told the crowd of 1,200 that he will continue to push for job preference for Boston residents and will file home rule legislation to give School Superintendent Laval Wilson more power and improve school department accountability.

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Rezoning plan moves into the home stretch

Boston Globe
April 9, 1987

"What we are proposing is a return to a period which was a golden age in Boston's past."

– Stephen Coyle, BRA director

By Charles A. Radin
Globe Staff

The Boston Redevelopment Authority's attempt to manage downtown growth through updating of the city's zoning code moves into the home stretch today with major questions on downtown housing and the borders of the high-rise zone unresolved, but with apparently widespread support for the rezoning.

The new zoning is scheduled for its third and final public hearing before the redevelopment authority board at City Hall this afternoon. BRAdirector Stephen Coyle said the Flynn Administration hopes it will become law in June.

Under the zoning plan's provisions:

● Downtown high rises would be limited to 30 to 33 stories. In the center of the financial district, this limit could be exceeded under specified circumstances. The 30-to-33 story high rise development zones would also be in the North Station and South Station areas and along Essex Street. By contrast, the tower of International Place, the city's newest tower, is 46 stories.

● Broadened protection would be extended to potentially historic buildings. Further large-scale development apparently would be discouraged by declaration of priority preservation areas including all of the Back Bay, St. Botolph Street, Beacon Hill and the Customs House area. Building heights would be limited to five stories.

● "Medium growth" districts would be established along Huntington Avenue, in Park Square and the Combat Zone, where heights would be 10 to 12 stories.

● Restricted growth districts would be established in Chinatown and the Bulfinch Triangle area near North Station, with building heights limited to six to eight stories, depending on design.

● In the core of the financial district, a very-high-rise building would be allowable if the developer would use one-third of the space for its own business activities – an effort to prevent development of speculative office buildings.

In a briefing to interested parties yesterday at City Hall, Coyle said, "what we are proposing is to return to a period which was a golden age in Boston's past" – a time when clear, detailed regulations governed development.

Coyle said the urban renewal efforts of the 1960s led to many current problems by removing downtown height limits, encouraging bidding wars for downtown land and drawing jobs and business out of the neighborhoods.

He said the key issue that "is on the table . . . but not in the plan" at this stage is creation of incentives for development of housing downtown. Such incentives would allow developers to exceed height limits in certain areas – which are yet to be determined – if they build housing. The maximum by which height limits would be exceeded under such a provision, if it is put back in the final version of the zoning, is 50 percent, Coyle said.

Anthony Pangaro, a principal in Macomber Development Associate and chairman of the Boston affairs committee of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, said the BRA effort "is a step in the right direction. I think the real question is does it go far enough" in eliminating subjective development politics.

Robert Beal, president of the Beal Co., said he had some concerns that the historic-building protections add a layer of bureaucracy, but that "as far as downtown height zone goes, I think they have built in flexibility. So I think that's fine."

John Gould, executive vice president of the Shawmut Bank, said "I can't get uptight" about a policy whose effect is to spread out growth in more low-rise buildings rather than concentrating it in fewer high-rises. "You're only talking about a period of two years" – the proposed statutory life of the new rules. "It's a way to not stop progress while they're putting together the policies needed to have continued growth while maintaining the historic character of the city.

Coyle and others, however, noted that the temporary status of the new plan was misleading because an amendment at any time could make the rules permanent.

Rezoning would cap heights in city core

The Boston Herald, Sunday, April 5, 1987

By JONATHAN WELLS

AN AMBITIOUS new zoning plan that will shape Boston's skyline well into the 21st century — and virtually ban skyscrapers — is about to emerge from the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

In an exclusive interview, BRA Director Stephen Coyle detailed the city's proposal to rewrite the Hub's zoning code for the first time in 27 years.

The rezoning plan, in the works since Coyle was hired by Mayor Ray Flynn in 1984, may sound the death knell for high-rise office towers in all but two designated growth areas: North and South Stations.

The glass and steel urban giants, which sprung up in downtown Boston over the last 25 years, will be replaced by what Coyle called "horizontal growth."

By capping allowable heights for new buildings at 155 feet in most of the city's core, the new zoning will encourage developers to rehabilitate older structures and fill pockets of blight with mid-rise buildings.

"We're trying to steer the economy in certain directions," Coyle said. "And some developers are going to have to hear the word 'no' — maybe for the first time.

"Historic Boston and new, post-1965 Boston can be brought into harmony if we build buildings of moderate mass. The message to the developers is, if you really want to avoid all these limits, go to North and South Stations, don't come into the grid."

In 1965, Mayor John Collins and then-BRA chief Edward Logue trumpeted the end of "the outmoded concept of height limits," Coyle said.

At that juncture in the city's history, when no one was willing to build in the downtown core, "they were right," Coyle said.

"But they created a market expectation for verticality. For the next 15 years, at least, we have to distribute development horizontally," he added.

Coyle said he will present the so-called Downtown IPOD (Interim Planning Overlay District) to the BRA board of directors for a vote on Thursday.

The new development rules will be binding for two years, once they are approved by the BRA, the Boston Zoning Commission and signed by the mayor, which Coyle expects to happen by June 30.

For the next two years, community-based panels will sit down and hammer out block-by-block zoning rules for 10 special study areas.

Those areas are: Prudential-/Huntington Avenue; the Midtown/Cultural District; the Financial District; Government Center; North Station; South Station; Cambridge Street; Chinatown; the Bulfinch Triangle near Boston Garden; and the Leather District on the edge of Chinatown.

Coyle's vision for the future of downtown development is likely to please in-town residents who have pushed for restrictions on commercial construction.

However, developers and other business interests are just as likely to squirm at the prospect of tighter zoning controls.

But Coyle argued that his plan will not undermine the Hub's real estate renaissance.

"Will it kill the building boom? No. It will moderate the growth," Coyle said.

Coyle said he wants to seize the opportunity presented by

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Rezoning takes ax to high-rise growth

The Boston Herald, Sunday, April 5, 1987

From Page D1

Boston's robust economy to "fill in" underdeveloped gaps in the city's downtown districts.

In the past, the concentration of new office construction in a few mega-towers has "prevented capital flow into blighted areas," Coyle said.

The new zoning plan is designed to push developers and investors into the North and South Station areas and the newly designated Midtown-/Cultural District before the economic winds shift.

"We want to get these areas done before the capital climate changes," he said.

The new zoning plan for Boston has gone through three stages since Coyle first floated it in July 1985. Initially, it covered most of the city and included a laundry list of other development-related initiatives.

Gradually, however, Coyle has narrowed the scope of the plan. It now focuses on a few essential changes needed to redirect and control new development.

"I think we have an approvable package now," he said.

As proposed, the Downtown IPOD includes five major zoning initiatives:

● New height limits: 300-400 feet at South Station and the Bedford/Essex corridor; 250-350 feet at North Station; 125-155 feet in the Prudential/Huntington Avenue area, the Midtown/Cultural District, most of the Financial District, Government Center and Charles River Park.

Also, 80-100 feet in the Bulfinch Triangle and Chinatown; and 40-65 feet in the Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Bay Village, St. Botolph Street and the Custom House District.

● A Historic Preservation Amendment to the zoning code which could increase the number of legally protected buildings in downtown Boston from 75 to 600, Coyle said. It also provides the Boston Landmarks Commission with $200,000 it needs to complete a comprehensive study of the city's historic buildings.

● A new "open space" zoning category designed to further protect existing parkland. Coyle said he may extend the open-space label to air space above major downtown highways, which would hinder any plans for major air rights development over the Mass. Turnpike or a depressed Central Artery.

● A Project Review Ordinance which would standardize requirements for transportation access plans, handicapped ac-s, design review, environ-ntal review and housing replacement for all projects over 50,000 square feet.

● The suspension of Planned Development Area (PDA) projects everywhere but in a 12-block section of the Financial District.

Called the "black hole of zoning" by Coyle, the PDA process allows developers to far exceed zoning limits assigned to their land. The 60-story John Hancock Tower and the 46-story first phase of International Place were both PDA projects.

But under the two-year plan, PDA projects are banned in Boston, unless they are built within the exempted core of the Financial District.

Even in that high-rise enclave, to earn PDA status developers and their equity partners will have to occupy at least 33 percent of their buildings themselves and prove their projects are "necessary to retain jobs in the city."

Coyle said an "overhaul" of the PDA process, which was included in earlier versions of the Downtown IPOD, has been set aside for future consideration.

The proposed zoning changes may have the biggest impact on what the city has come to call the Midtown/Cultural District.

Sandwiched between Arlington Street, Bay Village, Chinatown, the Financial District, School Street, the Boston Common and the Public Garden, the newly defined district has been assigned height limits of between 125 and 155 feet.

Overall, the Downtown IPOD gives neighborhood residents "a two-year period where they don't have to worry about large projects popping up," Coyle said. "Plus they get a say in the district plans."

Staff photo by Nancy Lane

SETTING SOME LIMITS: BRA Director Stephen Coyle at City Hall.